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THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE

1996
REPORT



THE COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Massachusetts Department of Education
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The head of the skeleton ever found was

This skeleton was given the size of a

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by the archaeologists



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner

January, 1997

Dear Friends:

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993--a broad and sustained commitment to improving student learning--included among its provisions the creation of a small number of new independent public schools: charter schools. The purpose of these new schools is to increase student achievement, offer parents more choices, encourage school districts to improve, and be held accountable for results.

Charter schools, which are started from scratch by parents, teachers, businesses, and community leaders, operate independently from school districts. They have the freedom to organize their activities around a core mission, curriculum, or teaching method. This autonomy also allows them to create their own budgets as well as hire and fire teachers and staff. In return for this freedom, a charter school must demonstrate good results within five years.

The first charter schools opened in Massachusetts in September, 1995. Twenty-two charter schools are now operating in 14 communities across the Commonwealth, enrolling 5,400 students from Kindergarten to grade 12. In a short time, the Massachusetts charter school initiative has gained national recognition for its innovation, strict accountability, commitment to high academic standards, as well as for the enthusiasm and support the schools have received from families.

As required by law, the 15 schools that opened in 1995 completed an annual report that describes their record for the previous school year. *The Massachusetts Charter School Initiative 1996 Report* is a brief summary of those annual reports, supplemented with information from reports required of all public schools, including charter schools, by the Massachusetts Department of Education. I would like to gratefully acknowledge the work of Scott Hamilton, Associate Commissioner for Charter Schools, and the other Department staff who created this report.

The pages that follow tell the remarkable story of what has been accomplished by hundreds of teachers, parents and others who have worked hard to turn their dreams into reality. While charter schools ultimately will be judged on academic results--which will come in the months and years ahead--the evidence so far suggests that the Commonwealth has already reaped many benefits from this small but dynamic initiative.

Sincerely,

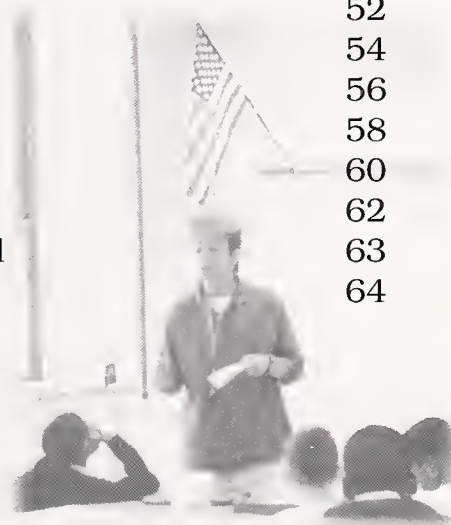
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert V. Antonucci".

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE

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"We must give parents—all parents—the right to choose which public school their children will attend and to let teachers form new charter schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job."

President Clinton

teachers and staff. In return for this freedom, a charter school must attract students and produce good results within five years or have its charter revoked. Fifteen schools opened their doors in 1995, enrolling 2,600 students. Seven more schools opened in 1996, bringing the current enrollment to 5,400. Nearly 4,000 more students are on waiting lists, hoping for a chance to attend one of these independent public schools.

Charter schools represent a bold departure from the one-size-fits-all approach to public education. They don't fit a particular mold but rather range from progressive to traditional. While one school focuses on the arts, another's emphasis is on character. Half serve urban areas, with the rest serving suburban and rural areas.

WHY CHARTER SCHOOLS?

Charter schools were created to provide more choices in public education, create competition among public schools, and spur innovation in pursuit of improved educational outcomes. The Massachusetts initiative, which began in 1993 with the passage of the Education Reform Act, grew out of the frustration many education reformers felt after the piecemeal efforts during the 1980s failed to yield any meaningful improvement in how well children were learning. Rather than tinker with individual elements of a school—akin to trying to repair a car as it hurtles down the turnpike—many reformers concluded that one of the best ways to create an effective school is to start from scratch and change everything at once.

These reformers also concluded that excellence and equity cannot be achieved simultaneously by insisting that all public schools conform to the same model. Instead, they suggested, public schools can and should be different from one another, providing various options to families. Public schools would no longer refer only to those schools within a system operated by a school committee, but also to schools created and managed by citizens, with the caveats that they be open to all comers, free of charge, and that they be held accountable by a public authority for student achievement in the core academic subjects.

Many people—professionals and laymen alike—have the creativity, skills, and desire to create better schools, charter school proponents argued, so we should allow them to do it. What's more, they said, since public education, like all institutions, resists reforms, and, in too many cases, has become oriented to the well-being of the providers instead of the consumers of education, a powerful incentive for change should be created in the form of competition for public tax dollars.

Governor William F. Weld and the Massachusetts state legislature agreed and



“Change was happening in some places, but we wanted it to happen faster. I wanted it to happen in time for my kids to benefit.”

Charter school founder

passed one of the first—and, according to researchers, one of the strongest—charter school laws in the country. Twenty-five other states now have some version of charter school laws, and over 400 charter schools are currently operating nationwide.

Since 1994, the Commonwealth has received 123 charter school applications from a wide array of organizations and community coalitions. Thirty-four of these applications received initial approval and 25 actually received charters. Five more remain on a “waiting list” pending action by the legislature to raise the current 25-school cap.

Charter applications were evaluated by the Secretary of Education*, the Secretary’s staff, and members of an external advisory council. The Secretary granted charter approvals based on the quality of the proposed school design, the need for such a school in the area, the potential impact the charter school would have on surrounding public school systems, and the strength of the founding coalition.

PUBLIC MONEY FOLLOWS THE CHILD

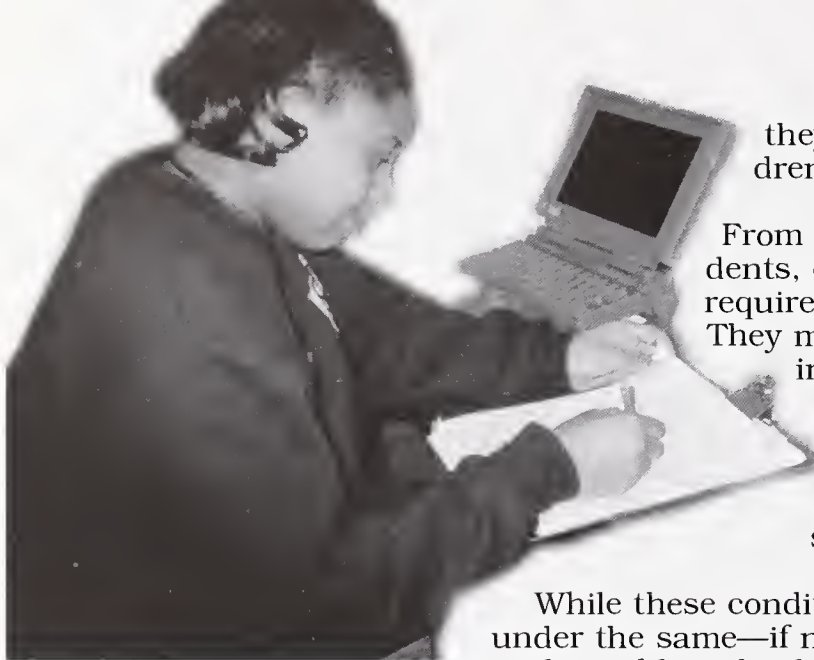
Charter schools, which must be open to all students, cannot charge tuition. Instead, tax dollars “follow” each child from his school district to the charter school. The average cost per student is calculated for every school district, and that sum is deducted from a district’s state aid for all of its students who enroll in a charter school. The same amount is then given to the charter school. As a result, charter schools receive no more than the average amount school districts spend per student. (The state legislature has sought to give districts a multiyear grace period by reimbursing them with increased state aid for the dollars that followed their former students to charter schools.)

In virtually all cases, student applications have exceeded available space in charter schools. Last year, in fact, charter schools received an average of more than two applications for every available slot. When applications exceed available space, charter schools must enroll students by lottery. Enrollment lotteries are, by all accounts, very dramatic events. Headmaster Kevin Andrews recounted the most recent lottery held at Neighborhood House Charter School in Dorchester: “As the names of the students who would be entering the school next year were read, I looked over at the parent of one of the last two children to be chosen for the kindergarten, and her face showed absolute joy that her child’s name had been called!” There is, however, a more unfortunate side of the lottery process. “Moments later, we announced waiting list places. Upon hearing his name called, a child shouted, ‘Mom, Mom, I got in!’ (thinking he’d made the lottery). The mother, however, cried. She had to tell her son that in fact he had not gotten into the school. She explained, ‘we will have to wait.’”

THE MOST ACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For the first time in the history of public education, public schools are being allowed to set their own high standards, demonstrate performance against those standards, and—most importantly—face the consequence of being shut down if

* Because the Executive Office of Education was eliminated in July, 1996, and the authority for charter schools was transferred from the Secretary of Education to the Board of Education, the Board now has responsibility for the oversight of the charter school initiative and will review charter applications in the future.



they fail to demonstrate success in helping children learn the core academic subjects.

From the moment they open their doors to students, charter schools face most of the same requirements and burdens as all public schools. They must, for instance, accept all students, including those with special needs. They receive the same amount of money per pupil, administer the same tests, file the same reports, and are subject to most of the same regulations as regular public schools.

While these conditions ensure that charter schools operate under the same—if not even more challenging—circumstances as regular public schools, they do not make charter schools accountable in the true sense of the word. Real accountability can be recognized among its many imitations by looking for three necessary elements: worthy objectives, credible measures of progress toward those objectives, and consequences (both rewards and penalties) based on performance.

Charter schools in Massachusetts have all three of these elements of accountability, although it is the rare consequences they face—the fact that, to keep their charter, they must prove themselves worthy of public money within five years, as well as attract and keep customers (students and their families)—that make these schools uniquely accountable.

The question that follows, of course, is how does a school prove itself worthy of public money. According to a recent Hudson Institute report, Massachusetts is ahead of the other charter states in answering this question by outlining the means by which charter schools will be held accountable. The decision to renew a charter after five years will be based on a straightforward evaluation guided by three central questions:

IS THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM A SUCCESS? An affirmative answer would be based on evidence that the school has made reasonable progress in meeting internally established goals over four years, and that student performance significantly improved and/or is persistently strong on internal and external academic assessments.

“I want us to be judged as rigorously as possible on how well we do with kids academically, not on how well we comply with regulations.”

Massachusetts charter school founder

IS THE SCHOOL A VIABLE ORGANIZATION? Yes would mean that the school is financially solvent and stable, enrollment is stable and near capacity, school governance is sound, and professional staff are competent and resourceful.

IS THE SCHOOL FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS OF ITS CHARTER? If the school's program and operation are consistent with the terms of its charter, and if the school is within the bounds of essential statutory and regulatory requirements, then the answer will be yes.

ACCOUNTABILITY CONTRACTS

Because it seeks to answer these standard questions without trampling on the unique character and mission of each school, the Commonwealth is working with charter schools to develop an accountability contract for each school. This

“Charter schools have the capacity to remove the bureaucratic handcuffs and offer NEA members opportunities to remake schools to respond to diverse learning needs.”

Keith Geiger, President
National Education Association

contract will describe clear, concrete and measurable school performance objectives. These objectives will reflect an emphasis on student achievement, but may also pertain to student attendance, parental satisfaction and participation, safety and order, mobilization of private resources, school environment, staff development, facility improvement, or fiscal management.

This accountability contract will also describe the measures the school will use to document progress toward those objectives, including credible student assessment tools for annually tracking student performance. Charter schools must report their objectives and progress toward them in an annual report due August 1 of each year (to be followed with a financial audit several months later).

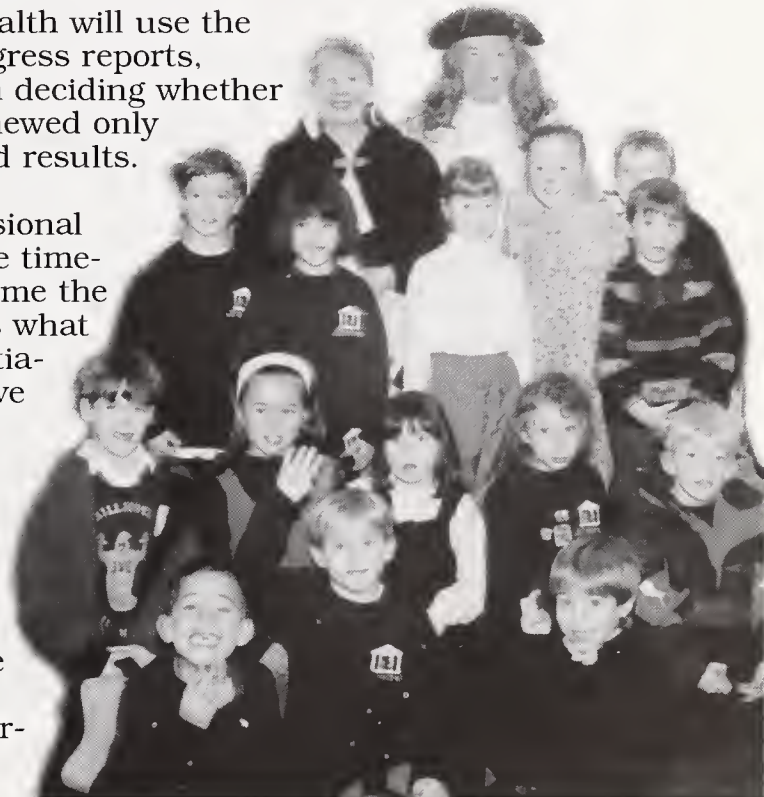
In addition, charter schools will be subject to an annual site visit conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Education and a small group of Massachusetts citizens who are not involved in the school, including one parent, teacher, school leader, business person, and public official. Visitors will tour the school and meet with the board of trustees, school director, parents, teachers, students and others. These visits will augment and corroborate the information in the annual report. Site visits will also help educate the general public about the charter school initiative and provide a charter school with critical feedback from a jury of objective peers.

At the end of five years, the Commonwealth will use the accountability contract, the annual progress reports, financial audits, and site visit reports in deciding whether to renew a charter. Charters will be renewed only for schools that have demonstrated good results.

Charter school leaders, despite an occasional (and understandable) grumble about the time-consuming reports they must file, welcome the opportunity to be held accountable. It's what attracted them to the charter school initiative in the first place: the chance to have greater freedom in exchange for greater accountability.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

By virtue of the fact that they are not part of a uniform school system and are granted the freedom to pursue unique approaches, charter schools are as different from each other as they are from



“Without a doubt, [the charter school] has been a good influence on us as a system. I see a response in our schools that people want to produce better results.”

Public school district
superintendent

charge tuition, but rather receive public dollars in the form of per-pupil tuition that follows the student from his school district to the charter school.

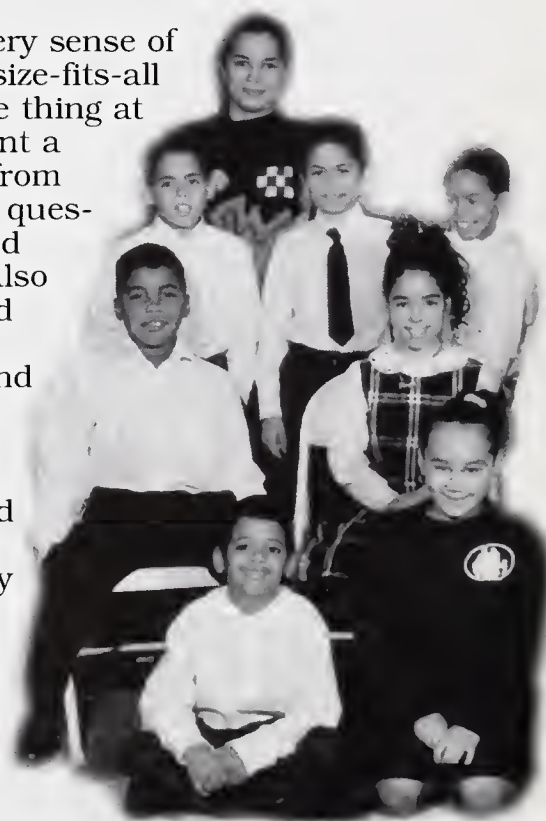
INDEPENDENT. Charter schools are a new breed of public schools that operate independently of union work rules, collective bargaining agreements, and the conventional school district management structure. A charter school is a separate public entity with sufficient autonomy to allow it to create its own budget, curriculum, program, and calendar, as well as hire and fire teachers and staff. In return for this freedom, a charter school must demonstrate good results within five years or lose its charter.

DIVERSE. Charter schools are diverse in practically every sense of the word. Rejecting the idea that schools must be one-size-fits-all organizations in which all students must learn the same thing at the same time in the same way, charter schools represent a host of different approaches to helping students learn, from E.D. Hirsch’s “Core Knowledge” to Ted Sizer’s “essential questions,” from recitation and memorization to project-based learning, and from CD-ROM to field studies. They are also diverse racially, ethnically and geographically. Scattered across the Commonwealth, most charter schools are in urban centers, with the others located in small towns and suburbs. As a result, nearly half of all charter school students are minorities.

MOTIVATING. Rather than simply attracting motivated parents, charter schools actually seem to motivate parents, as well as students and teachers. Based on survey responses and anecdotal evidence, parents seem motivated by the ability to choose—and have a real voice in—their child’s school. Students seem to be motivated by a new kind of learning environment. And teachers seem to be motivated by greater freedom to create curricula and teach lessons in the way they find works best.

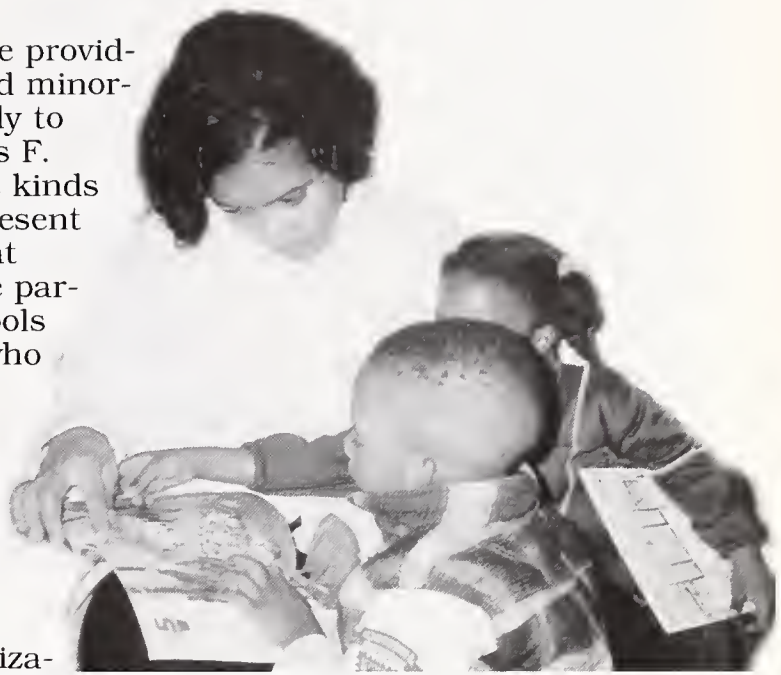
many regular public schools. Yet, in the first years of this initiative, empirical data, observation, and anecdotal evidence reveal at least twelve traits shared by charter schools across the Commonwealth. It may, in fact, be these defining characteristics that are behind the great demand for these schools and why many of them seem likely to do very well by their students.

PUBLIC. Charter schools serve the public, use public funds, are held accountable by a public authority, and are governmental entities authorized by the Commonwealth. Like other public schools, charter schools must be accessible to all school-aged children, regardless of race, color, national origin, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English, physical or mental disability, or academic achievement. Charter schools may not



EQUITY-CREATING. Many charter schools are providing educational opportunities to low-income and minority youth that previously had been available only to wealthier families. As Senate President Thomas F. Birmingham has said when speaking about the kinds of educational alternatives charter schools represent for all parents, "I think it is unconscionable that everybody has a choice in schools, except those parents without substantial means." Charter schools bring exciting public school options to people who otherwise may not have them.

MISSION-DRIVEN. Because charter schools are created from scratch by parents, laymen, professionals, and organizations interested in creating a new school with specific educational purposes and academic objectives in mind. Consequently, charter schools tend to be very mission-driven, purposeful, and focused organizations that attract people—parents, students, teachers, staff—who are committed to a set of agreed-upon purposes. Since everyone attending or working in a charter school chooses rather than is assigned to the school, charter schools need not attempt the impossible task of trying to be all things to all people.



"Don't tell me urban minority parents don't care. This charter school has given these parents an opening, an option, and they're taking advantage of it."

Charter school principal

MARKET-ORIENTED. Charter schools, which need to attract and keep customers in order to exist, must be responsive to the families who entrust them with the education of their children. As a result, charter schools tend to be consumer-friendly environments in which the academic achievement of students is the central motivation. What's more, market forces deter charter schools from adopting rules and customs that can become system-serving and job-preserving rather than student-serving.

DEMANDING. Not only do many charter schools have a longer school day and longer school year than most public schools, they appear to be placing greater demands on almost everyone associated with them. More is expected of students, in terms of both school work and as citizens of a school community. Teachers, who must craft and refine curricula and lesson plans, while teaching classes, working with parents, and participating in the creation of a new school, report working harder and longer than ever. Parents, too, are expected to take an active interest in their children's work and often become more involved in the life of the school. Charter schools also demand a great deal from state government, which, in order to sensibly respond to the unique circumstances of charter schools, must show new flexibility and a willingness to support unconventional approaches.

ENTERPRISING. The entrepreneurial groups who devote hundreds of hours to a successful charter application immediately face the challenge of creating a new school in a limited time while being given no facility in which to house the school and scant resources with which to furnish it, hire teachers, or purchase books. It

is against such odds that charter school founders have plied extraordinary inventiveness, resourcefulness, and creativity in order to greet the first day of school fully prepared.

COMMUNITY-BASED. While not always embraced by local superintendents or school committees, charter schools exist only where there are hundreds of parents, community leaders and others who wanted a different kind of public school for their community. If community can be correctly defined as an association of people united by a common interest, then charter schools are quintessential communities. They represent vibrant associations of people with common educational visions and a common interest in the successful education of their children. Charter schools can be community-building, too. For example, Nestor Torres was planning to move his family from Lawrence to New Hampshire, but “when the time came, we decided not to leave Lawrence so that my daughter Tiara could stay in the charter school.” At the Community Day Charter School, Torres says, “parents are welcomed, we have a sense of ownership, people have rallied around the school...it’s created a sense of community.”

“I used to be able to slack off quite a bit in my former school. Not here. They don’t let you. They’re always challenging you to reach new heights.”

Charter school student

REFORM-DRIVING. Charter schools provide competitive pressure that gives reform-minded parents and school leaders within traditional public schools greater leverage in moving systems toward change. A Boston Globe editorial in April of 1996 argued that charter schools can be “an important prod for stalled public education systems. The state-chartered City on a Hill and Renaissance schools, for example, certainly quickened the pace of school reform in the Boston public school system.” The Boston Public Schools’ Pilot School initiative is the most prominent of many examples of how charter schools are fueling education reform in communities across the Commonwealth.

ACCOUNTABLE. Because they must attract and keep their customers—parents and students—in order to survive financially, charter schools are more accountable for results than other public schools in the Commonwealth. If a sufficient number of families don’t choose to enroll their children, or if they leave the school because they don’t like the education that is being provided, a charter will go out of business. Moreover, since the success of a charter school will be measured by the academic progress of its students, charter schools are establishing clear academic standards, as well as means by which parents, teachers, students, and the state can determine whether those standards are being met. Since charters must be renewed after five years by the state Board of Education, a school that can’t demonstrate good results will not be allowed to keep its charter.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The first charter schools are only in their second year of operation. Yet, while this initiative has yet to reach its full potential, it has already fulfilled many of the purposes outlined in the 1993 Education Reform Act, such as promoting innovation, providing more public school options, and spurring much-needed reforms.

The first comparable standardized test results, from the Sabis International Charter School in Springfield, show that, on average, its students progressed a year and a

half academically within seven months at the new school. While further evidence of the success of charter schools—including academic results from the other schools—will come in the months and years ahead, other indicators suggest that the Commonwealth has already reaped many benefits from this small but dynamic initiative.



As has been described in the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, *Education Week* and other newspapers, Massachusetts charter schools are known nationally for their innovation, commitment to high academic standards, longer school days and years, and the enthusiastic support they receive from families.

Former critics of charter schools have been surprised to learn that almost half of all charter school students are racial and ethnic minorities. A majority of charter schools that opened last fall serve disadvantaged and at-risk youth. Instead of simply attracting motivated parents and families, charter schools seem to be motivating parents and students alike by empowering them with consumer power and real choices among public schools. What's more, about 80 percent of respondents to a survey of parents and students reported that their first-year charter school experience was superior to that in their previous school.

In addition to delivering quality educational opportunities for dissatisfied parents, charter schools have also begun to reshape the educational landscape in Massachusetts for the better. Already, the competition from charter schools has helped reform-minded education leaders in Boston and other communities implement changes in regular public schools. Charter schools are pursuing innovative methods of helping students learn that can be replicated in other schools, ranging from City on a Hill's jury assessment system to the "Kidlab" at Neighborhood House

to Sabis International's weekly diagnostic tests. Innovations in teaching, testing, governance, and finance, which are at the center rather than the periphery of charter school designs, doubtless will be borrowed and improved upon by reformers in other public schools.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the charter school initiative has been the often-overlooked fact that 22 schools were able open at all. It is no mean feat for volunteer school founders to locate and acquire a facility appropriate for a school, renovate it, hire teachers and staff, develop curricula, buy books, enroll students by lottery, and track down student records, let alone do all this without

"I finally know what it means to be an 'empowered teacher.' I can set high expectations for my kids, design my own curriculum, pick up my own texts. I'd be crazy not to want to work here."

Charter school teacher



significant start-up funds from the Commonwealth.

Charter schools seem to have done well, too, despite the small administrative staffs and intense scrutiny from the outside. Without much administrative support—and no district office—charter schools managed budgets, made decisions, suspended students, hired and

fired teachers and principals, provided special education services, and abided by federal and state laws. All the while, these schools filed dozens of reports, hosted hundreds of visitors and researchers, and answered thousands of questions.

Massachusetts charter schools attracted nearly \$2 million dollars in private donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals. They attracted another \$2 million from the federal charter school grant program proposed by President Clinton and approved by Congress two years ago to assist charter schools with start-up funds. No state has won more support per charter school than Massachusetts.

As Ted Sizer, a national leader in education reform and a founder of the Francis W. Parker Charter School put it, "Everyone—parents, kids, and teachers—have taken on too much, but they have done very well. It has been a remarkable first year."

CHALLENGES

Taken together, the charter school initiative has made a promising start, but this early success does not mean that charter schools can claim to have achieved all their goals or that the waters ahead will be smooth. All charter schools still face many challenges: managing future growth, refining and strengthening curricula, and sustaining the energy and enthusiasm that attends new ventures.

*"There are people out there
who don't believe
in public schools.
Take a look at what
we're doing."*

Charter school director

The single greatest challenge charter schools face, however, is a lack of access to capital for the acquisition, expansion, or improvement of adequate school facilities. While the Commonwealth provides charter schools with operating funds equal to the average cost per student of the school districts in which their students reside, charter schools receive neither facilities nor funding to acquire or renovate them. In fact, charter schools are currently prohibited from receiving school building assistance funds that regular public schools receive from the state. Most schools have either already encountered or still face the problem of facilities that are too small, decrepit, or are inadequate in other ways. This problem is made worse by the fact that commercial banks have been wary of lending even small amounts of money to these entrepreneurial schools.

Another common challenge for charter schools is governance. As with most new organizations, charter schools encountered some problems in their first year. The founders, Boards of Trustees, school leaders, parents, and staff at several schools found that, in the process of creating a school—its program, expectations, customs,

"In many cases, the new independent public schools have invigorated public education and filled parents and teachers with new enthusiasm. Dozens of individual theories about better teaching or improved school organization are getting a test run."

Education Week

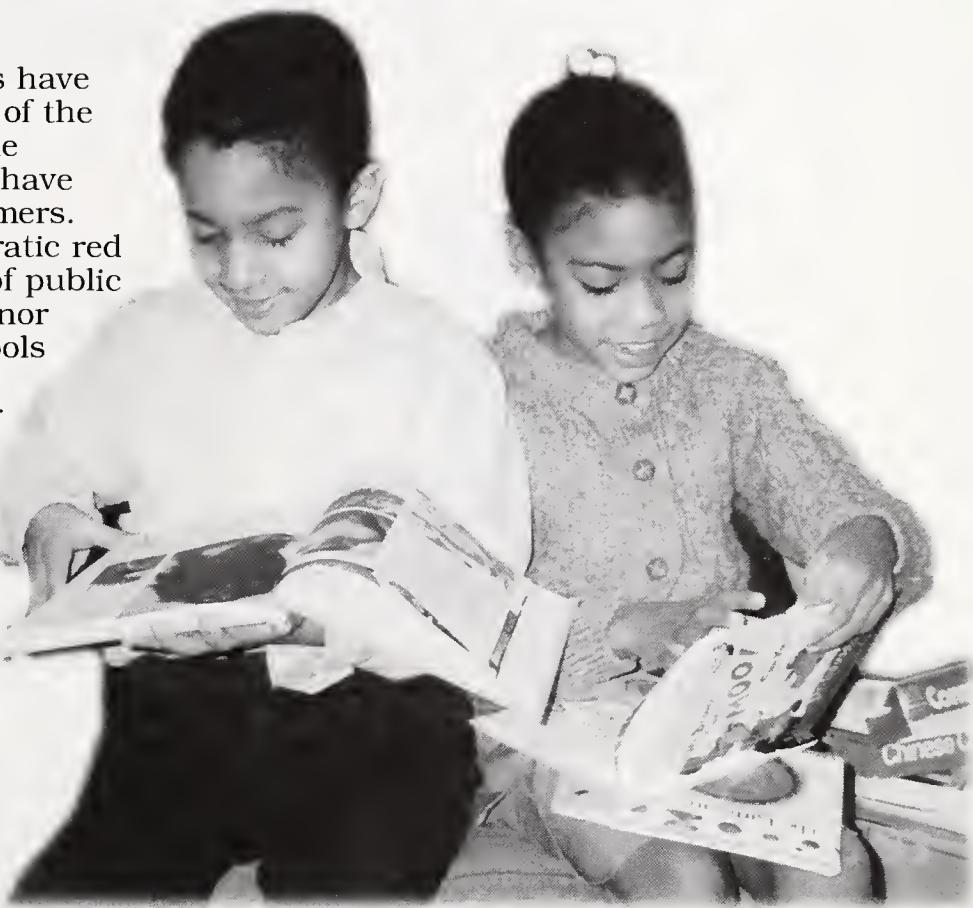
expand the grades and number of students they can serve. State law arbitrarily caps the number of charters at 25 and severely limits the number of students who can attend them. Another constraint on growth is the dearth of facilities in which to operate. More students and communities could benefit from charter schools if the caps were raised and if assistance were provided for the financing of facility acquisition and renovation.

Nevertheless, charter schools have proven themselves to be one of the most dynamic elements of the Education Reform Act. They have thousands of satisfied customers. They are shredding bureaucratic red tape and out-dated notions of public school uniformity. As Governor Weld has said, "Charter schools have given parents—regardless of what color they are or how much money they have—the kind of educational choices that used to be reserved for the elite few." And these schools will continue to receive public funds only if they deliver good results, not simply on account of their existence. All told, charter schools have the potential to help revive trust in public education.

and procedures—they sometimes had competing visions of how things should be. Other schools found that, under duress, their management structure needed to be clarified and improved. Freedom and independence, for both schools and individuals, demand sound governance, and some charter schools, which have no district office to tell them what to do, have experienced occasional turmoil as they learn to govern themselves well.

LOOKING AHEAD

The promise of charter schools to fundamentally reshape public education in the Commonwealth depends on their sustained growth and momentum. Many communities do not yet have a charter school help accelerate reform. There are many teachers, parents, and community leaders, too, that want the opportunity to create their own independent public schools. And the charter schools that are currently operating may not be allowed to



MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE 1996 STATISTICAL PORTRAIT



SCHOOLS

- Scheduled to open in 1997: **3**
- Approved applicants on the waiting list: **5**
- Charter applications submitted since 1994: **123**
- School districts sending students to charter schools: **134**
- As a percentage of all public schools: **.01%**
- Serving predominantly disadvantaged/at-risk youth: **11**
- Requiring school uniforms: **8**
- Extended academic school day: **19**
- Open longer than the 180 day state minimum: **12**
- Provide before- and after-school programs: **17**
- Average school size in the 1996-97 school year (students): **238**
- Projected average school size in the year 2000: **475**

22 SCHOOLS CURRENTLY OPEN

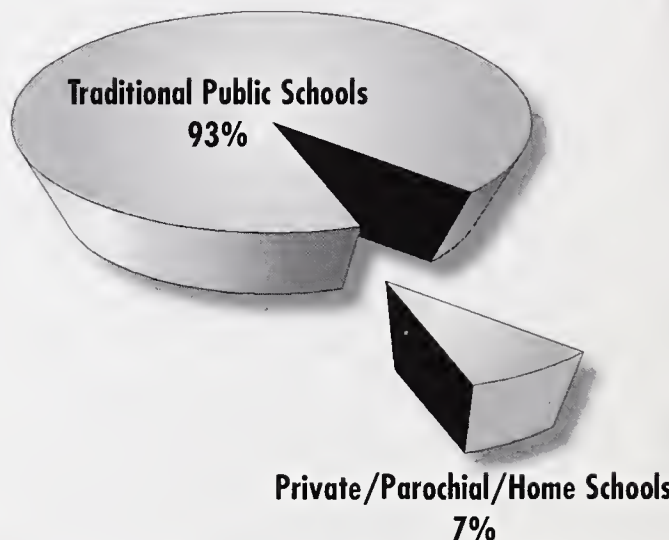
■
ELEMENTARY: 9
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE: 4
MIDDLE: 4
HIGH: 4
K-12: 1



STUDENTS

- Enrolled: 1996-97 - **5,465** 1995-96 - **2,608**
- On waiting lists: **3,607**
- Enrollment as a percentage of state public school population: **.06%**
- Percentage coming from regular public schools (excluding Kindergarten): **93%**
- Percentage representing racial and ethnic minorities: **44%**
- Percentage with Individualized Educational Plans: **12%**
- Percentage who are language minorities: **15%**

WHERE
CHARTER SCHOOL
STUDENTS
COME FROM

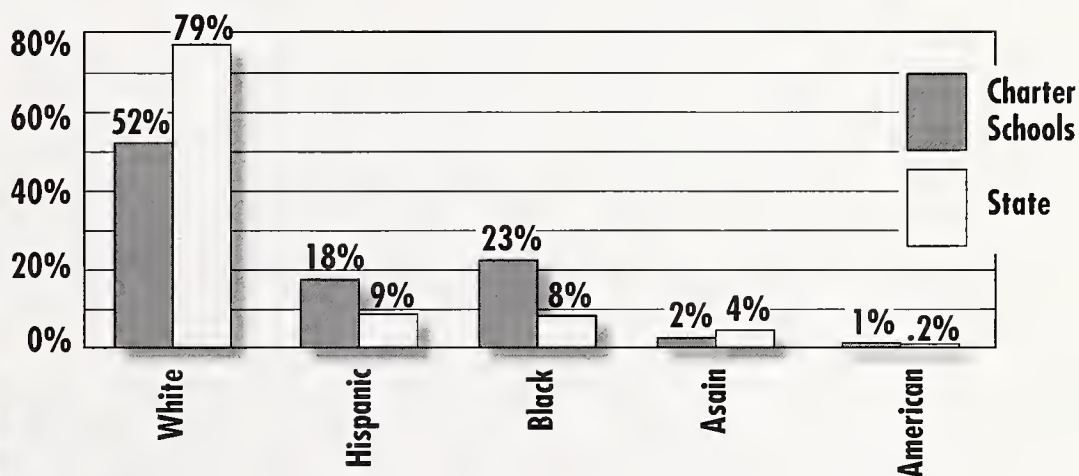




STAFF

- Number of teachers: **399**
- Percentage certified by the Department of Education: **77%**
- Average teacher/student: **13:1**
- Applications received for teaching positions since 1995: **9,588**
- Salary range: **\$22,000-\$60,000** (State range: \$19,562- \$60,594)

RACE/ETHNIC
MAKE-UP IN
CHARTER SCHOOLS



FUNDING

- Average state tuition per student (96-97): **\$6,073**
- Estimated total payments transferred to charter schools in FY97: **\$34.7 million**
- Total state reimbursement to above and below foundation districts losing students to charter schools in FY97:
 - Below foundation school districts: \$28.7 million*
 - Above foundation school districts: \$1.9 million*

MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. *How are charter schools funded?*

A. For each child a charter school enrolls, it receives a sum from the state equal to the average cost per student in the school district in which that child resides. The amount a charter school receives for a student remains the same even if the child requires special education services. The state then deducts the same amount from the school district's state aid account. (School districts, however, receive additional state funds in order to partially or fully "reimburse" them for losses to charter schools.) Like other public schools, charter schools are also eligible to receive federal and state program funds. Charter schools, a number of which have attracted funding from private sources such as foundations, private donors, and businesses, have received small start-up grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

Q. *Do charter schools serve children with special needs?*

A. Yes, charter schools may not discriminate on the basis of mental or physical disability, special need, or academic achievement, and charter schools must comply with the same state and federal laws regarding the provision of special education services. Twelve percent of charter school students have IEPs (which means they are officially classified as special education students), and many more have special needs that are being met by charter schools without IEPs.

Q. *Who is evaluating charter schools?*

A. Charter schools are one of the most scrutinized elements of education reform. Formal evaluation is done by the Massachusetts Department of Education, which collects and analyzes reports, conducts annual site visits, and monitors the performance of charter schools. The Board of Education will use these data and reports in making decisions regarding the renewal of charters. Other organizations are also collecting information and evaluating charter schools: the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission; the Federal government; RPP International; national research organizations such as RAND and Hudson Institute; universities; and Massachusetts think tanks.

Q. *What makes charter schools different from other public schools?*

A. One of the main differences is that charter schools have the freedom to pursue a mission, use innovative approaches, and create a budget, schedule, and curriculum without the constraints of collective bargaining agreements. Another difference is that everyone in a charter school—parents, students, teachers—has made the choice to be there; no one is assigned to these



“Charter schools...shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement.”

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71,
Section 89

toward them in the annual report due August 1 of each year (to be followed with a financial audit several months later). The Department of Education will use the accountability contract and the annual reports and audits, along with other information collected from annual site visits, to determine whether a school's charter should be renewed.

Q. *Why are for-profit companies allowed to operate charter schools?*

A. State law allows charter school Boards of Trustees to make contracts for the procurement of educational services, and so far five schools have contracted with for-profit education management companies. Educational excellence and private sector management are not necessarily incompatible. Public education in Massachusetts is already a multi-million dollar industry for textbook publishers, test-makers, school-bus companies, computer manufacturers and other suppliers of goods and services. Companies can offer communities educational expertise, provide access to capital, and infuse significant private sector funds into public schools. Where a Board of Trustees has hired a private company to manage the school and achieve the goals of the charter, it can easily terminate the contract if the Board isn't satisfied with the company's performance.

schools or compelled to attend them. Perhaps most importantly, charter schools must produce good results within five years or lose their charters. While different in these and other ways, charter schools must follow the same state standards, take the same tests, and abide by virtually all the same laws and regulations as other public schools.

Q. *How is the state holding charter schools accountable?*

A. Each school must develop an accountability contract that describes the school's objectives as well as the measures the school will use to document progress toward those objectives, including credible student assessment tools for annually tracking students. Charter schools must report their objectives and progress

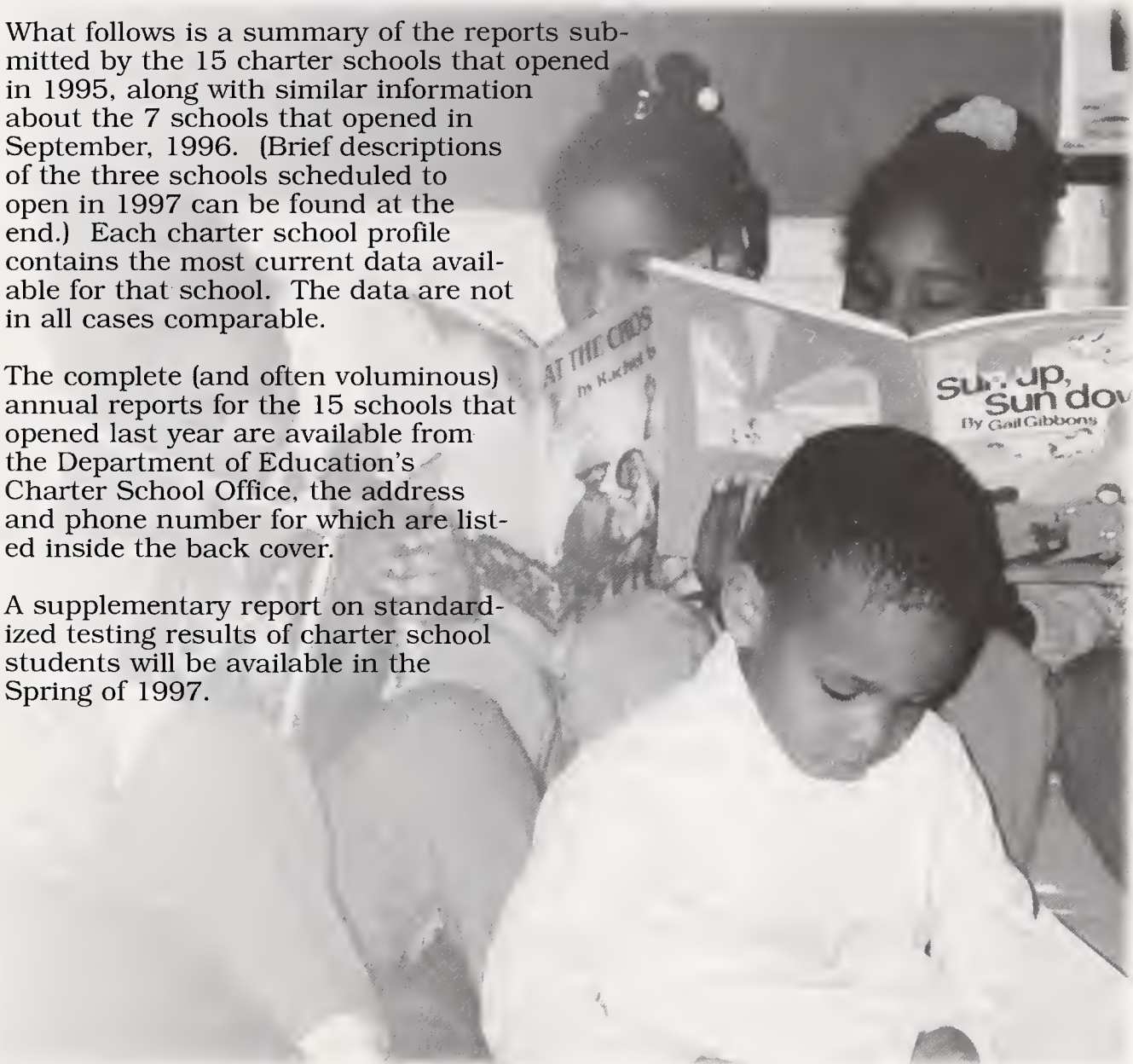
MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE SCHOOL PROFILES

According to state law, "Each charter school shall submit to the Board of Education, to each parent or guardian of its enrolled students, and to each parent or guardian contemplating enrollment in that charter school an annual report." Charter schools, like other public schools, are also required to submit various reports throughout the year.

What follows is a summary of the reports submitted by the 15 charter schools that opened in 1995, along with similar information about the 7 schools that opened in September, 1996. (Brief descriptions of the three schools scheduled to open in 1997 can be found at the end.) Each charter school profile contains the most current data available for that school. The data are not in all cases comparable.

The complete (and often voluminous) annual reports for the 15 schools that opened last year are available from the Department of Education's Charter School Office, the address and phone number for which are listed inside the back cover.

A supplementary report on standardized testing results of charter school students will be available in the Spring of 1997.



CHARTER SCHOOL PROFILES



ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Atlantis Charter School is to provide the services and support necessary for every child to learn to full potential and to leave school well-equipped for adult life as a productive worker and responsible citizen.

DESCRIPTION: Located in a former convent in Fall River, Atlantis

Charter School offers a well-rounded elementary school program that uses an individualized approach with balanced instruction in all content areas. Its aim is to become a family learning center, with the sea—visible from the school—as the theme for teaching and learning.

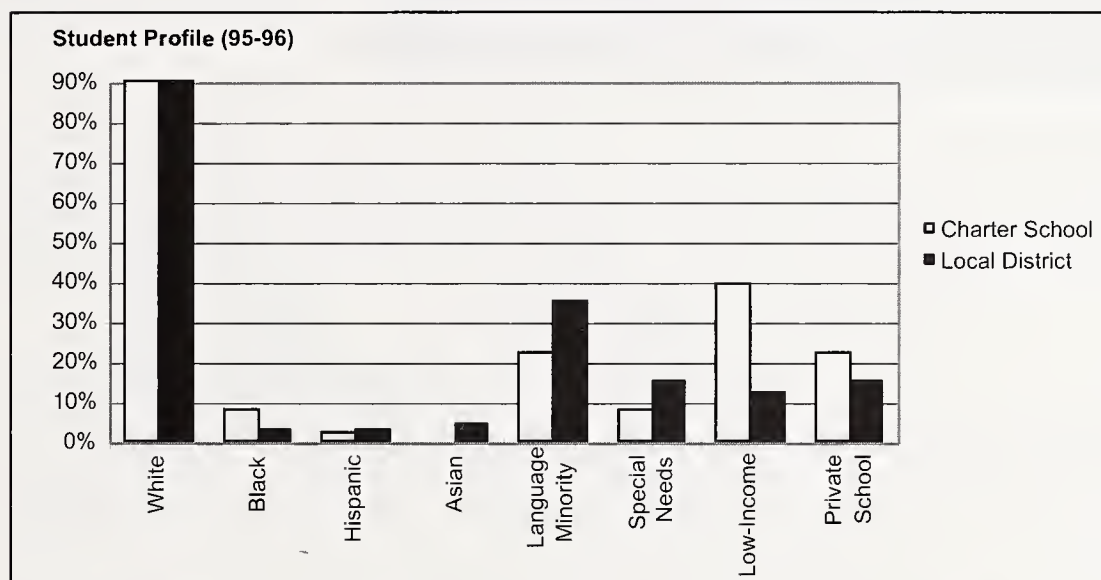
While intent on creating a nurturing environment and providing a range of services, the school also expects families and students to understand and assume responsibility for their role in the learning process. Students, dressed in the school uniform of blue skirts and trousers with light blue or white tops, are expected to help their fellows and treat them with respect and civility. Parents, who are expected to enter into a “compact” with the school that asks, among other things, that they contribute time to the school, volunteered an average of 100 hours per week last year.

Atlantis uses authentic learning materials as well as thematic instruction with an emphasis on developing habits of mind in science, especially marine science. Parents are welcomed as stakeholders in the school community, and the school’s teachers go out of their way to be accessible to parents. Atlantis also offers an extended care program before and after school.

ORIGINS: Atlantis Charter School grew out of the Fall River Regional Task Force and Fall River 2000, community-wide coalitions of public and private sector leaders committed to education reform. In the words of John Correiro, a former Fall River school superintendent who spearheaded the creation of the school, it is all about “giving kids the opportunity for an alternative education—to a new model that pays more than lip service to parent and community involvement.”

STATISTICAL PROFILE: ATLANTIS CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
95-96	219	K-5	\$5,508	8:15-3:15 182 days	92.2%	625	4
	335	K-6					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
34	10:1	>440	100%	\$18,000-\$43,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Atlantis students took the following tests in 1995-96: Metropolitan Achievement Test-7 and the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

CONTACT:

James Wallace
 Atlantis Charter School
 2501 South Main Street
 Fall River, MA 02724
 Phone: 508-672-1821
 Fax: 508-672-1397



BENJAMIN BANNEKER CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Benjamin Banneker Charter School is to help minority students overcome the traditional barriers to academic success, and to provide all Cambridge youth with an educational opportunity to develop their talents, fulfill their potential, and excel in all areas of life.

DESCRIPTION: Taking its name from the noted African-American Renaissance man of the 18th century whose life was filled with invention and achievement in mathematics and science, Benjamin Banneker Charter School offers students a strong, well-rounded academic foundation with a focus on math and science. The program sets high expectations for all students and is designed to encourage them to learn cooperatively and at their own pace.

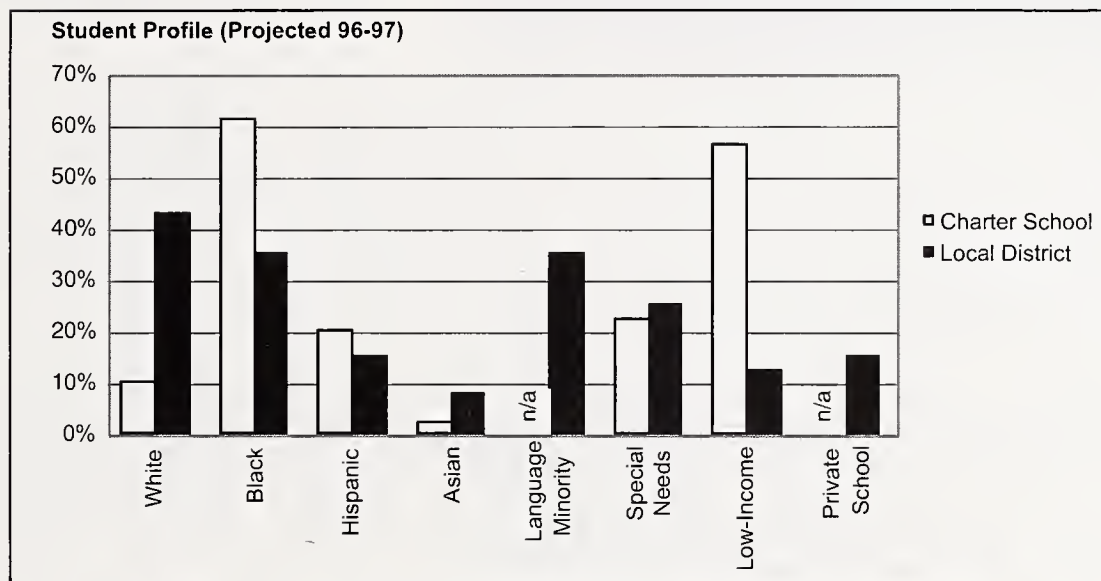
Opened in the former Notre Dame School in North Cambridge, Benjamin Banneker seeks to create an orderly yet nurturing environment in which students, grades Kindergarten through five, are not allowed to fall behind in their studies. The school, whose student population is predominantly black and Hispanic, was established to help minority and disadvantaged students succeed academically.

The school day begins with a "family meeting" that lasts for about an hour. It includes a calisthenics, play time, and discussion about issues ranging from school rules to field trips. Every six weeks, all children must exhibit what they have learned in front of an audience of teachers, parents, and classmates. With plans to add grades six through eight over the next few years, Banneker will also pioneer a new technological system called Cyberkey that links computer and video to form an effective tool for learning.

ORIGINS: The Benjamin Banneker Charter School was started by a group of black educators, community leaders, Harvard Law School professors, and others who believe that too often minority children are not being well-served in public schools. "This school is about opportunity for the kids who have been missing it," explains Scott Darling, a lawyer who serves on the Board of Trustees.

STATISTICAL PROFILE: BENJAMIN BANNEKER CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97	196	3-5	\$7,293	8:00-3:00 180 days	92%	250	1



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
15	13:1	100	27%	\$30,000-\$36,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Banneker's students will take the following tests:
California Achievement Test

CONTACT:

Afiya Graham
Benjamin Banneker Charter School
21 Notre Dame Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02142
Phone: 617-497-7771
Fax: 617-497-4223



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN CLASSICAL CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School is to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children by providing children with a classical academic education coupled with sound character development.

DESCRIPTION: The Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School, which rents the former St. Mary's School near the center of the bedroom community of Franklin, was founded by parents. The school is a focused, purposeful organization whose activities are undergirded by the school's "four pillars": parental involvement, Core Knowledge, community service, and character development. Core Knowledge refers to the curriculum developed by E.D. Hirsch, which describes the academic content children should know by the end of each grade.

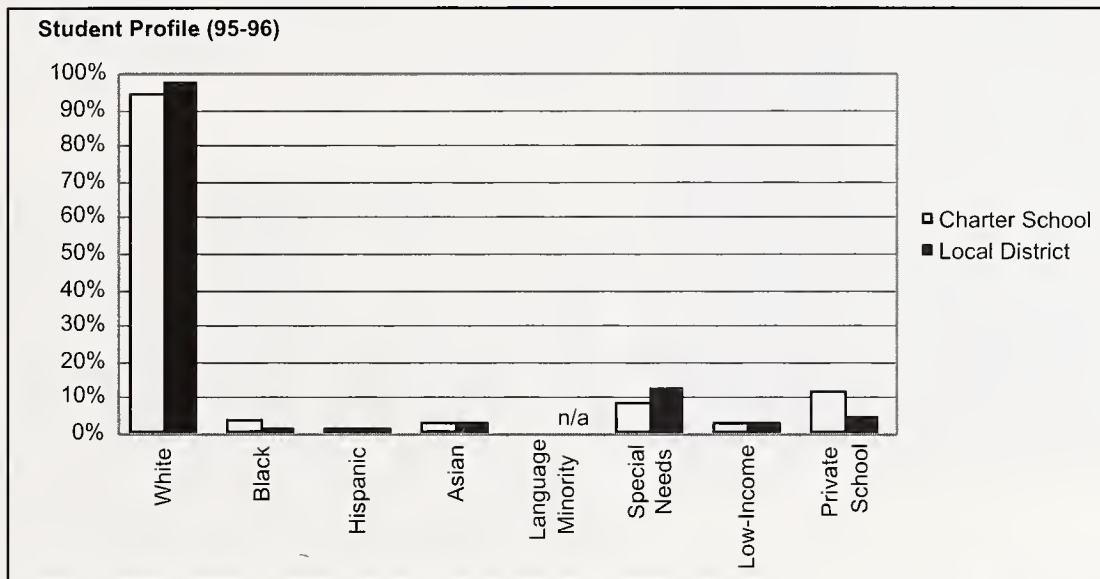
In addition to the use of Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence, character education is woven throughout the entire academic program of this school. The approach to character education, inspired by the school's namesake, Benjamin Franklin, is to encourage students to strive toward virtue daily. Students learn about and receive recognition for demonstrations of such virtues as honesty, discipline, compassion, frugality, industry, moderation, and humility.

Last year, the school's main entrance and hallway became overgrown by the "Forest of Virtue," whose construction-paper branches were filled with leaves honoring students and others who had done good deeds. Students keep a daily character journal in which they reflect on the Virtue of the Month and also regularly participate in community service opportunities as part of the school's graduation requirements.

ORIGINS: A group of parents in Franklin who met through their children's school-related activities wanted a public school that was in sync with their common belief that character building, self-worth, and academic depth are central to the education of children. "There are character traits that are universally respected and acclaimed, and there is basic content that all children should know" explains Tim Casey, one of the school's parent founders. "That's what this school is all about."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN CLASSICAL CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	149	K-4	\$4,934	8:45-3:10 185 days	96%	385	42
	197	K-5					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
11	18:1	>400	82%	\$20,000-\$43,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Benjamin Franklin students took the following tests in 1995-96: California Achievement Test-5 and Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

CONTACT:

James Bower
 Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School
 201 Main Street
 Franklin, MA 02038
 Phone: 508-541-3434
 Fax: 508-541-5396



BOSTON RENAISSANCE CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Boston Renaissance Charter School is to prepare a diverse cross-section of Boston children for success with a high quality education all at prevailing public school costs.

DESCRIPTION: Boston Renaissance is one of the largest charter schools in the nation—and growing—with over 1000 students enrolled in the 1996-97 school year. Within a few years, 1,400 elementary, middle, and high school students will fill the newly renovated 13-story building in the heart of Boston that this school calls home.

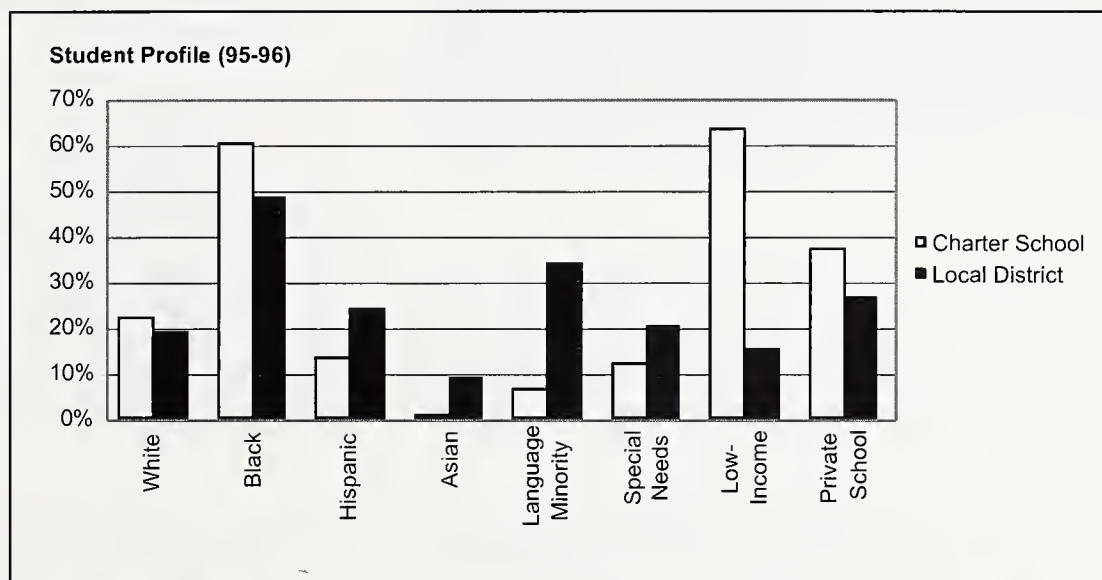
The school emphasizes a world class education, as well as civility and civic responsibility. The ethos of the school, where many students wear uniforms is one of structure and seriousness combined with enjoyment and opportunity. The brightly painted walls on each floor of the building, each with their own distinctive color, represent “houses” of just over 100 students who will remain together for several years, creating greater continuity between students and teachers, and a strong sense of community.

The Boston Renaissance Charter School is a partnership of a local foundation and The Edison Project, a private management company, which is providing an innovative curriculum, professional development to help teachers stay on the cutting edge, and an ambitious use of technology. Each student, for instance, is supplied an Apple computer at home that is linked to the school. A longer school day is designed to help students meet challenging academic standards and allows for considerable exposure to art, music, drama, and foreign language.

ORIGINS: The founding coalition of the Renaissance School consists of a partnership between the Massachusetts-based Horace Mann Foundation and The Edison Project, working in conjunction with dozens of interested Bostonians. “The idea was to create a catalyst, an engine, a symbol of what you could have in an urban setting,” says Bob Gaudet, who helped start the school. “We want it to be something everybody can look at and utilize to find a way to create effective schools.”

STATISTICAL PROFILE: BOSTON RENAISSANCE CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
95-96	644	K-5	\$7,805	8:00-3:30 205 days	93.5%	>2000	1,847
96-97	1,045	K-8					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
70	15:1	>1600	95%	\$32,000-\$44,100

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Renaissance students took the following tests in 1995-96: Mass. Educational Assessment Program, MAT-7, Stanford Achievement Test-9, and Edison-ETS Common Performance Assessments.

CONTACT:

Barbara Wager
 Boston Renaissance Charter School
 250 Stuart Street
 Boston, MA 02116
 Phone: 617-357-0900
 Fax: 617-357-0949

CAPE COD LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL



The mission of Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School is to foster the intellectual development of early adolescents by providing a student-centered program around challenging interactive learning experiences that will bridge traditional academic disciplines.

DESCRIPTION: Located in a shopping plaza in the resort-town of Orleans, Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School is a

middle school that allows students to move at their own pace through an interdisciplinary curriculum. In addition to projects that cut across the core academic subjects such as science and history, the school also offers programs in the performing and visual arts, including drawing, painting, sculpting, and woodworking. The school seeks to establish a community of learning that is built upon the values of personal responsibility, consideration for others, respect for the environment, academic integrity, and perseverance.

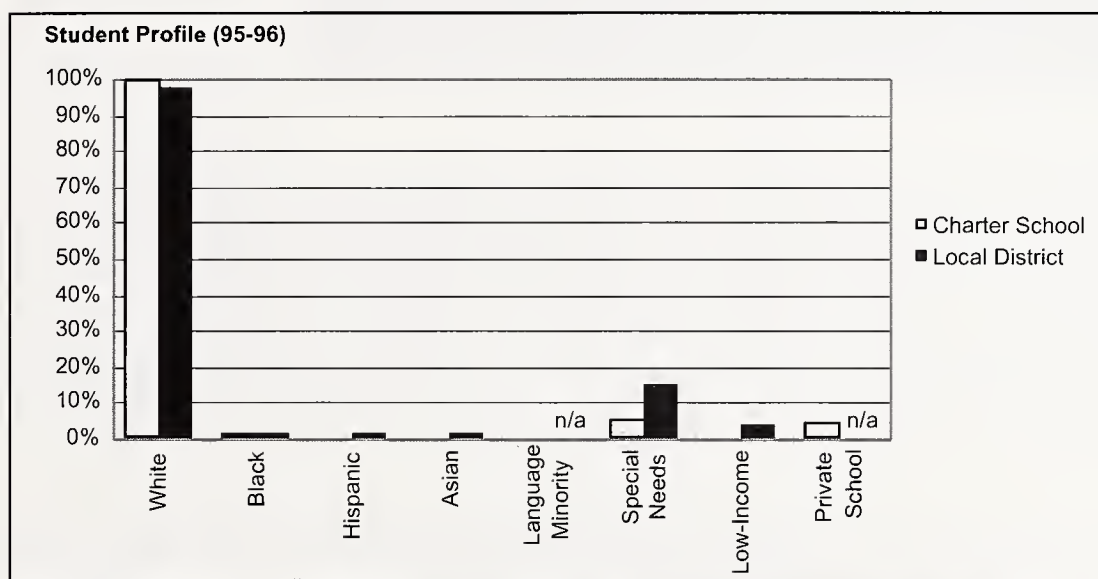
Cape Cod Lighthouse is sustained by a small but dedicated and creative staff who seem energized by the schools' small class sizes and non-institutional environment. Key decisions are made by the teachers, with support and guidance from the school's director. The fact that the school had a "writer in residence" and brought a Shakespeare troupe to the school are only two examples of how it both utilizes and bolsters the academic and cultural resources of the Cape.

The school uses a flexible day schedule, hands-on classroom learning with on-site field learning opportunities organized by teams of teachers and community partners such as Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Cape National Seashore, WOMR in Provincetown, Castle Hill Center for the Arts, The Five College Consortium, and the Boston Children's Museum. The Lighthouse School has also forged partnerships with the other public junior high and high schools.

ORIGINS: The school, inspired by Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, was founded by a grass-roots coalition of parents and community organizations. As Paula Miner, a founding parent and Trustee put it, "We wanted to create a school that demands much of students, that takes advantage of community resources, and where there isn't an artificial boundary between the practical and theoretical."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: CAPE COD LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	130	6-8	\$6,325	9:05-3:10 185 days	95%	372	35
	162	6-8					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
13.4	12:1	150	75%	\$20,000-\$47,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Cape Cod students took the following tests in 1995-96: Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program and the California Achievement Test

CONTACT:

Patricia Anthony
Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School
225 Route 6A
P.O. Box 1959
Orleans, MA 02653
Phone: 508-240-2800
Fax: 508-240-3583



CHELMSFORD PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Chelmsford Public Charter School is to provide students with a challenging interdisciplinary education that allows them to achieve their maximum potential through a participatory, relevant, and applied learning process.

DESCRIPTION: Housed in the first floor of a two-story office building with a school-like facade, Chelmsford Public Charter School is a middle school program that emphasizes the development of problem-solving skills that can be applied in all disciplines. While the content in each general subject area is not greatly different from what's covered in the traditional middle school, the methods of delivery used at the charter school differ dramatically. This difference is guided by an approach called Systems Dynamics, which gives students a mental framework for processing knowledge, synthesizing learning, and seeing beyond the facts to understand broader principles.

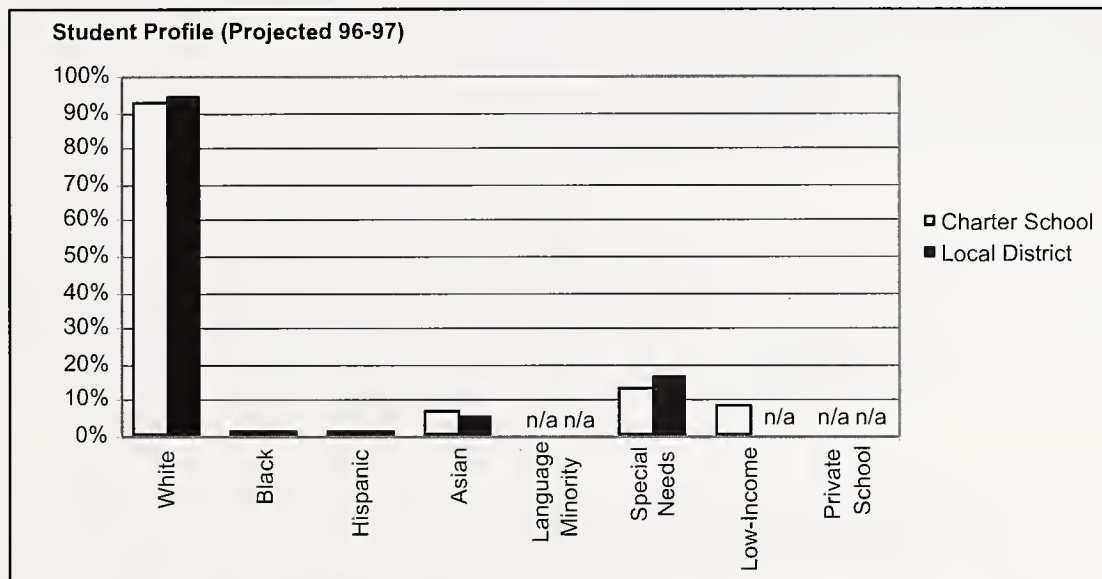
The school is organized into small units that meet at the beginning of each day with an exercise to encourage positive and candid interaction between students and teachers. Teamwork and "team learning" are central to the Chelmsford program, with teachers teaching in teams of two or three, and students working in teams on projects. In addition to small class sizes and computer-rich classrooms, the school offers students and teachers voice mailboxes for increased communication.

To strengthen ties between family and school, parental participation is expected of all parents, flexible to the demands of their schedules. The school is managed by Alternative Public Schools, a for-profit educational management company.

ORIGINS: The school was founded by the Chelmsford Alliance for Education, a coalition of community members, parents and businesses that, since 1992, has been working to improve public education in Chelmsford. Members of this coalition, a number of whom are engineers and scientists, wanted to create a different middle school option that would better prepare children for the academic challenges of high school and college. "Change was happening in some places, but we wanted it to happen faster," says Nina Lewin, a founder and parent. "I wanted it to happen in time for my kids to benefit."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: CHELMSFORD PUBLIC CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97	154	5-8	\$5,389	7:30-1:50 (M,W,F) 7:30-3:45 (T,Th) 180 days	95.3%	254	69



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
9	22:1	900	11%	\$18,000-\$42,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Chelmsford's students will take the following tests:
(A standardized test has not yet been selected.)

CONTACT:

Susan Jamback
Chelmsford Public Charter School
197 Littleton Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824
Phone: 508-250-8815
Fax: 508-250-5975



CITY ON A HILL CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of City on a Hill Charter School is to graduate responsible, resourceful, and respectful democratic citizens prepared to advance community, culture, and commerce.

DESCRIPTION: Located within the Main YMCA building in downtown Boston, City on a Hill Charter School is a urban high school where high expectations, seriousness, and an enveloping sense of community are the hallmarks. All students read Shakespeare, write

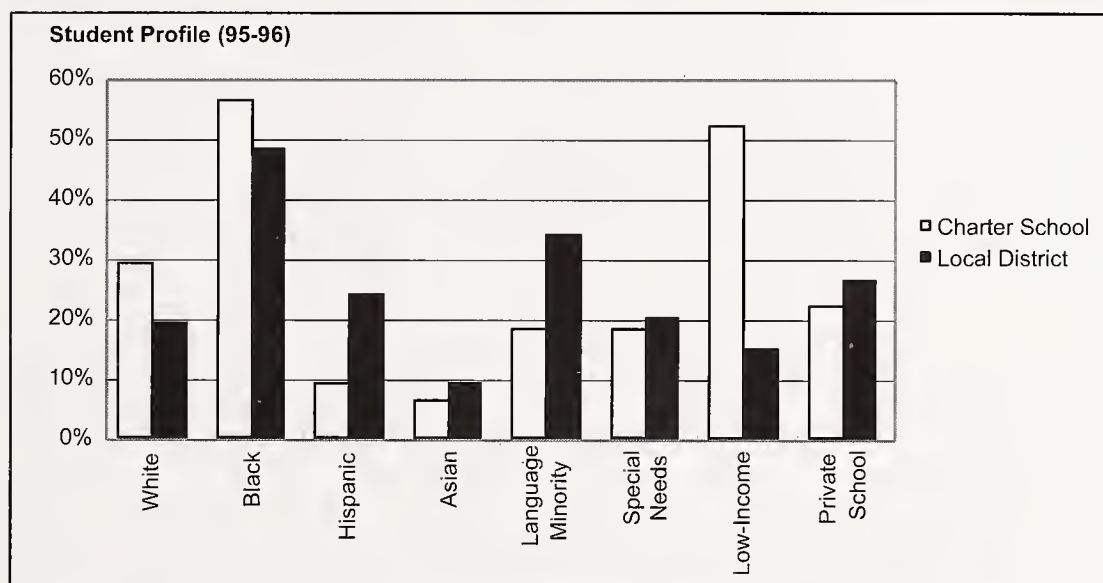
essays, speak in public, use computers, study algebra, read primary documents in history, and learn to swim. Additionally, all students wear the school's simple uniform, participate in a weekly school town meeting (where they have debated everything from U.S. foreign policy to school rules), perform public service, and complete several hours of homework a night. Last year they visited museums, climbed Mount Monadnock, traveled to Ellis Island, and stood atop the Empire State Building.

The school, which boasts near perfect attendance, is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with a study hall on Saturdays. Most students spend the summer in internships and academic programs throughout Boston. Teachers at City on a Hill are free to manage their own classrooms as they see fit, but are evaluated on the basis of student outcomes. These outcomes are derived, in part, by 72 members of the public who served on juries at year end to assess students in reading, speaking, math and science. Ninth graders—most of whom are minorities from Boston's toughest neighborhoods—were putting in 14-hour school days last June preparing for their final projects, final examinations, and final public presentations before citizen juries.

ORIGINS: Ann Connolly Tolkoff and Sarah Kass, the school's founders, were teachers at Chelsea High School. Frustrated by low academic standards and the system in which they were being asked to teach, the two began to talk about creating a different kind of school. "I really passionately believe in the power of education to change things," says Ann, a longtime public school teacher who had reservations about the charter school initiative "I had to give a lot of thought to this, and Sarah would say, 'this is the hope for public education.'"

STATISTICAL PROFILE: CITY ON A HILL CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	65	9-10	\$7,805	8:30-4:00 180 days	95%-98%	222	51
	100	9-11					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
9	11:1	>700	75%	\$35,000-\$45,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: City on a Hill's students took the following tests in 1995-96: Metropolitan Achievement Test, SAT, and the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), Stanford-9 (96-97)

CONTACT:

Sarah Kass
 City On A Hill Charter School
 320 Huntington Avenue
 Boston, MA 02115
 Phone: 617-262-9838
 Fax: 617-262-9064



COMMUNITY DAY CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of Community Day Charter School is to work together as a community to discover and support the special characteristics and unique learning styles of each student, helping them achieve basic mastery in Math, English, Science, Social Studies, and Spanish.

DESCRIPTION: The approach of Community Day Charter School is to

create a safe and supportive environment in which staff are free to do whatever it takes to help its predominantly Hispanic student body succeed academically. In a building on a hillside overlooking the old mill buildings of Lawrence, the school has one teacher and one aide in each classroom, at least one of whom is able to speak Spanish. Community Day supports a variety of teaching styles within the context of individualized learning plans for each student, with an emphasis on hands-on learning and field trips.

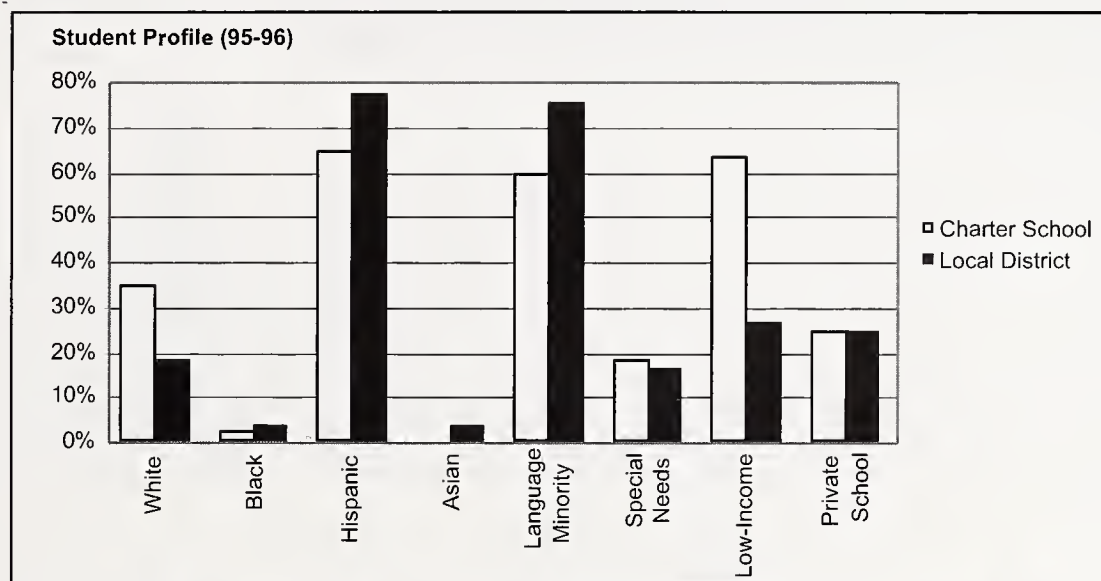
The curriculum and testing used by Community Day is borrowed the Modern Red Schoolhouse, a performance-based school design that has earned national recognition as one of the New American Schools Development Corporation models. In order to help all students meet the challenge of this rigorous curriculum, Community Day has a longer school year. And to help meet the needs of its families, the school has a longer school day and year. The school, which requires uniforms and weaves a drug prevention efforts into the life of the school, refers families to social services, helps implement social service plans, and in some cases, provides social services as needed.

Frequently described as "comfortable" by students and parents, Community Day has a high regard for parent input and participation. A number of parents have even attributed the school as the reason they decided to stay in (or move back to) Lawrence.

ORIGINS: Community Day Charter School was created by a city-wide coalition led by Sheila Balboni, who for twenty-five years has run Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, Inc., a community-based organization dedicated to providing child care, education, and support for working families. "We were prodded by families," says Sheila, "to create a public elementary school that incorporated the features of our existing programs—parent input, bilingual staff, relevant curriculum, and a welcoming and warm environment."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: COMMUNITY DAY CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
95-96	110	K-4	\$6,504	8:00-4:00 186 days	95%	342	111
96-97	134	K-5					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
12	11:1	285	75%	\$22,000-\$36,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Community Day's students took the following tests in 1995-96: Metropolitan Achievement Test-7, Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), Language Assessment Scale (K-2), and the Brigance Screening (kindergarten)

CONTACT:

Kathy Egmont
 Community Day Charter School
 190 Hampshire Street
 Lawrence, MA 01841
 Phone: 508-681-9910
 Fax: 508-975-3120

FRANCIS W. PARKER CHARTER SCHOOL



The mission of Francis W. Parker Charter School is to help all students learn to use their minds well by mastering a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge through a student-centered interdisciplinary educational process.

DESCRIPTION: The Francis W. Parker Charter School is named for a 19th century man who is known as the father of progressive education. It uses the Coalition of Essential Schools philosophy that “less is more,” the idea that students should master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge rather than broad and comprehensive content-driven curricula. Located in a former military building on Ft. Devens, the Parker School is a democratically governed middle school with an inquiry-based curriculum comprised of extended units that integrate the core academic subjects. A 12-week project in history-philosophy-social science, for example, consists of studying the “Melian dialogue” in Thucydides, Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense,” the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution; George Orwell’s “Animal Farm” and speeches by Martin Luther King and Patrick Henry.

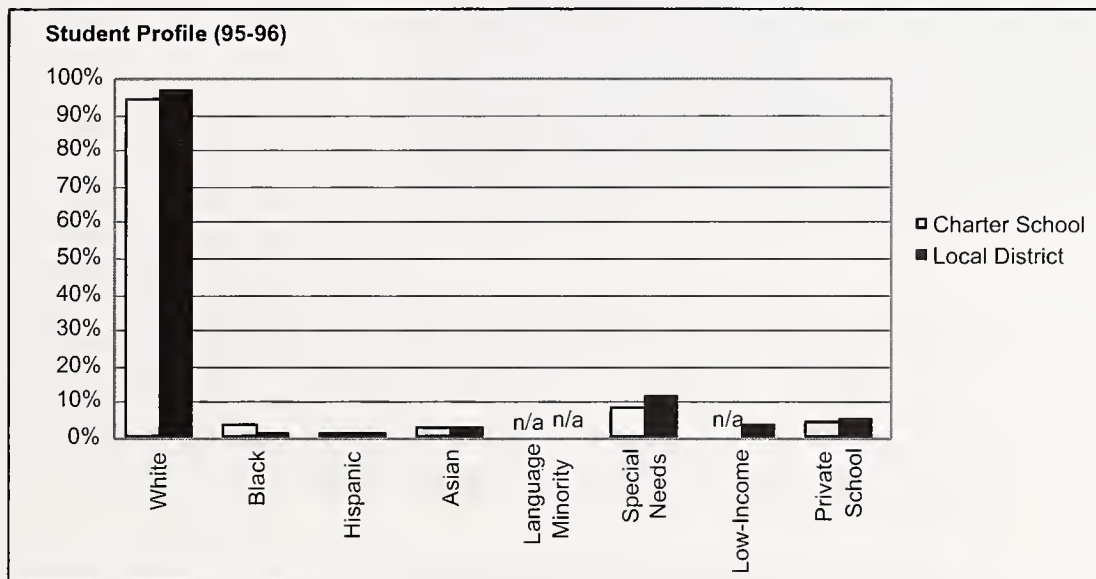
The educational practice of the school is guided by TedSizer’s Nine Common Principles of Essential Schools. Among these are that teaching and learning should be personalized, that the governing metaphor should be the student-as-worker rather than teacher-as-deliverer, and that there is no system of credit earned by time spent in class, only for mastery of skills and areas of knowledge.

Each year, the school will add a grade level, going up to 12th grade. There are no “grades,” only “divisions” with students of mixed ages. Students assemble a Year-End Portfolio in two domains: Mathematics, Science and Technology; and Arts and Humanities. Students advance to the next level when their portfolio shows that they are consistently meeting the standards for that division.

ORIGINS: Founded by a group of parents, academics, and former school committee members living in the Harvard area, including John Stadler, a venture capitalist, Laura Rogers, an educational psychologist, Kathleen Cushman, a journalist, and TedSizer, author, and director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform. “What this school is,” says Sizer, “is an expression of the purely American belief in democracy, belief in the freedom of the mind.”

STATISTICAL PROFILE: FRANCIS W. PARKER CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	122	7-8	\$6,466	8:30-3:30 185 days	97%	320	15
	190	7-9					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
22.75	8:1	>225	44%	\$27,500-\$60,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Francis W. Parker's students took the following tests in 1995-96: Stanford-9, the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), and Portfolios

CONTACT:

James Nehring
 Francis W. Parker Charter School
 Building 2602
 P.O. Box 2129
 Fort Devens, MA 01433
 Phone: 508-772-3293
 Fax: 508-772-3295



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School is to involve the school and the community in sustaining a non-discriminatory, rural, learning environment that uses the innate curiosity and creativity of children to stimulate exploration of the arts and sciences through an integrated curriculum.

DESCRIPTION: Hilltown Cooperative Charter School is the smallest of the charter schools, located in the rural hilltown of Williamsburg. It is an

elementary school that draws upon the "Reggio Emilia" approach to learning, a child-centered pre-school program created after World War II in the Italian village of Reggio Emilia. The approach aims to let a child's queries and interests guide the curriculum. For instance, a class of students, ages 5-7, expressed a particular interest in outer space. Meetings with students and parents ultimately resulted in the joint creation of a model spaceship. Academic skills were taught in the context of this construction project.

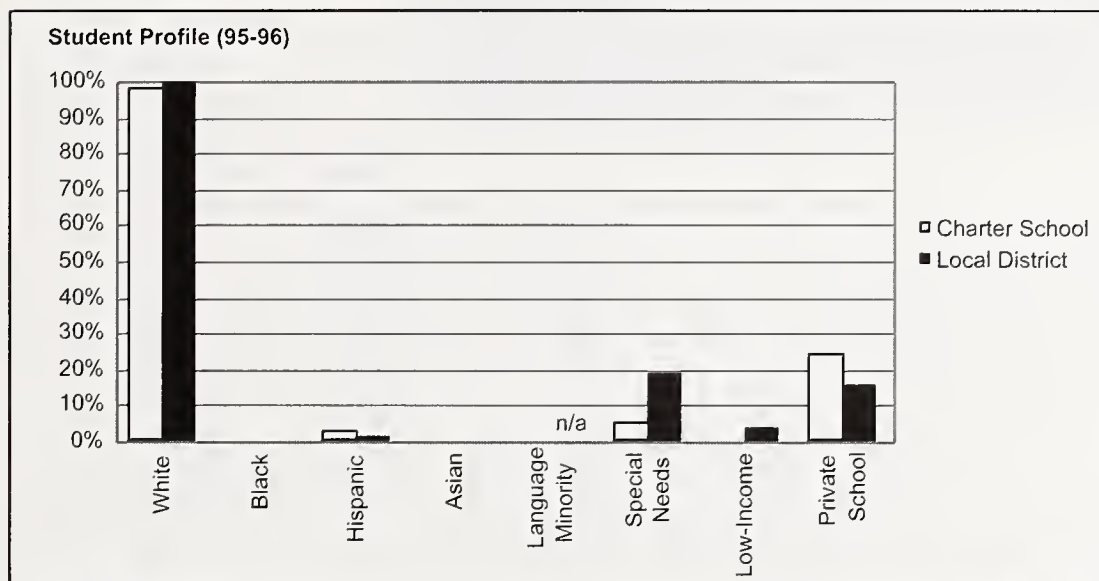
A central theme is selected each year for the entire school, serving as a point of departure for learning and skill development in all areas. Because the visual and performing arts are woven throughout the curriculum, the school, located in a renovated mill building at the side of the Mill River, has the feel of an art studio. Hilltown's students are grouped in small, mixed-age classrooms that have a rich supply of materials, such as, natural plant materials, musical instruments, paint, paper, children's literature, wire, tape recorders, microscopes, clay, recycled materials, and math manipulatives, that are available for exploration, problem solving, and project learning.

The school enjoys a high level of parent involvement, with an open classroom policy for parents to visit, observe, and participate. While the school's day-to-day management is handled by an administrator, the school is governed by consensus management through a cooperative organizational model.

ORIGINS: Parents in the rural communities of Hampshire county wanted a child-centered elementary school program where teachers would have the ability to pursue the creative impulses of children in the classroom. Bill Cutler, one of the school's founders, describes the original motivation as a "desire to create an environment that stimulates the natural creativity of children."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	45	K-4	\$5,766	8:30-4:00 (M-Th) 180 days	90%-95%	>154	26
	54	K-5					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
4	14:1	110	100%	\$24,500-\$27,195

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Hilltown's students took the following tests in 1995-96: Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program.

CONTACT:

Amy Aaron
Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
P.O. Box 147
Haydenville, MA 01039
Phone: 413-268-3421
Fax: 413-268-3185



LAWRENCE FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Lawrence Family Development Charter School is to use a parental involvement program and a two-way bilingual program as the foundation for increased academic achievement of children.

DESCRIPTION: Located in a renovated building that was once the headquarters for the Blue Seal Feed Company, Lawrence Family Development Charter

School offers a thematic curriculum in a two-way language model (English and Spanish) to children of predominantly working class Hispanic residents of Lawrence. This elementary school program requires school uniforms and features small class sizes with an aide in every room. The curriculum follows guidelines established in the state curriculum frameworks, with an emphasis on literacy as a foundation skill for lifelong learning in all subject areas. Technology, values, and citizenship are integrated throughout the curriculum.

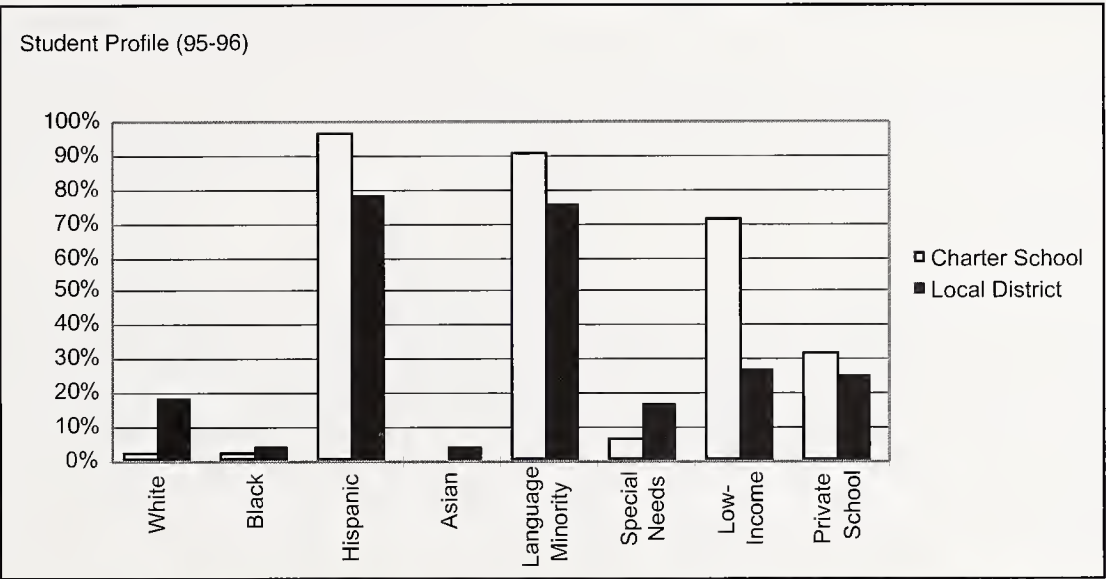
Lawrence Family Development has established a number of partnerships in the community. Physical education classes are provided at the YWCA of Greater Lawrence. The art program is offered in collaboration with the Essex Arts Center. An After School program is staffed by parent volunteers, youth from the Lawrence Youth Commission City CORE, and students from Phillips Academy, Andover.

Family development isn't just a part of the school's name, it is a central part of school's activities. Parent outreach and involvement is seen as a force in improving the academic performance of students. The school's Family Learning Center offers programs and training throughout the day in English as a second language, family literacy, citizenship, parenting, and substitute teaching.

ORIGINS: The school was created by members of the Lawrence Family Development and Education Fund, Inc., a non-profit organization committed to strengthening the family through education as a basis for rebuilding community, and a group of Latino parents, members of the Parent Mobilization Project of the Lawrence Youth Commission. The idea for the school started with Patricia Karl, a former public school teacher who says the school became a reality thanks to "parents committed to access to quality education for their own children, and community activists committed to access to quality education for all children."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: LAWRENCE FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

96-97 95-96	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
	180	K-3	\$5,880	7:00-6:00 180 days	96%	494	88
	240	K-4					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
14	17:1	170	71%	\$24,500-\$30,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Lawrence Family Development’s students took the following tests in 1995-96: Stanford Achievement Test, the Brigance Test, and Aprenda (standardized test in Spanish)

CONTACT:
Aracelis Garcia
Lawrence Family Development Charter School
34 West Street
Lawrence, MA 01841
Phone: 508-689-9863
Fax: 508-689-8133



LOWELL MIDDLESEX ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School is to enable its students to achieve academic, social and career success, and to help all students earn admission to college.

DESCRIPTION: Located on the third floor of the Middlesex Community College in the heart of Lowell, this

school offers a college preparatory program to high school drop-outs, almost half of whom represent ethnic minorities, one-third of whom do not speak English as a first language. Students are grouped together without regard to age or grade completed at their previous school. The curriculum is taught by teachers in teams, with intensive one-on-one counseling and extensive peer interaction within the classroom.

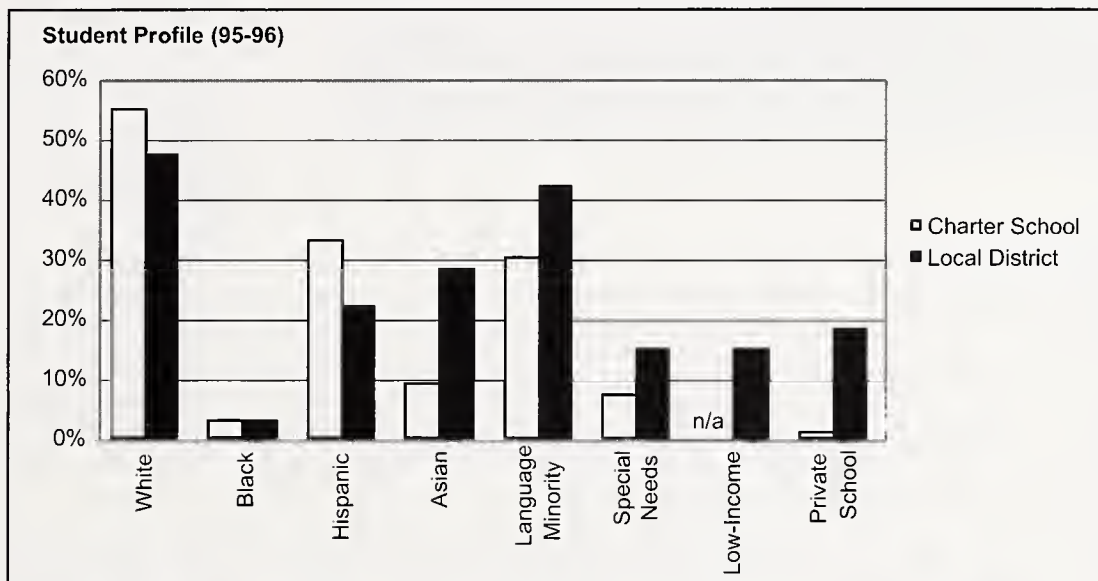
Faculty and students at the high school benefit from college-level resources that come from being housed in a middle college—classrooms, computer labs, science labs, library and cafeteria. The school uses the College Board Computerized Placement Test as an entry and exit assessment. Students are also tested using PSAT and SAT exams. Teachers establish the school schedule, and because a number of students have jobs or other demands on their daytime hours, the school is open from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with dinner provided on site to all students. Students have a say in the school. For instance, a central ethical value, such as truthfulness, was selected by students for each month of the school year.

Upon graduating from Lowell Middlesex Academy, each student will have a competency-based high school diploma, a demonstrable set of academic skills, experience in the workplace and/or community service, a clear awareness of the rights and responsibilities of a U.S. citizen, and a personal development plan for the years beyond high school. Of the seventeen 1996 graduates, sixteen are going on to college.

ORIGINS: The Lowell public schools, as part of a desegregation plan, had contracted with Middlesex Community College every year since 1989 to provide an alternative high school program consisting of remedial and academic instruction for students who had dropped out of Lowell High School. "With the Academy, we set out to create a safe and supportive school that encourages young adults who have fallen through the cracks," says executive director Karen Moore. "Becoming a charter school has meant more flexibility to do our jobs well."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: LOWELL MIDDLESEX ACADEMY CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	100	9-12	\$5,560	11:00-8:00 190 days	79.5%	345	91
	100	9-12					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
5	20:1	>300	80%	\$30,000-\$36,750

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Lowell Middlesex Academy's students took the following tests in 1995-96: PSAT, SAT, College Board Computerized Placement Test (CPT), Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, and the Learning Preference Inventory

CONTACT:

Karen Moore
 Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School
 33 Kearney Square
 Lowell, MA 01852
 Phone: 508-656-3285
 Fax: 508-656-3150



MARBLEHEAD COMMUNITY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

The mission of Marblehead Community Charter Public School is to create a partnership among community members, teachers, parents and students that will provide early adolescents with the support necessary to reach their highest individual potential intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically.

DESCRIPTION: Marblehead Community Charter Public is a school for fifth through eighth grades that uses an academically rigorous and individually flexible curriculum based on a global thematic approach. The five themes featured last year were: Groups, Communities, and Institutions; Changes—Cycles and Transformation; Conflict and Harmony; Time; and, Space and Communication. Teachers, who meet and plan together every day, use a flexible approach to teaching that is reflected in each student's individual learning plans. Arts education is also woven into the curriculum.

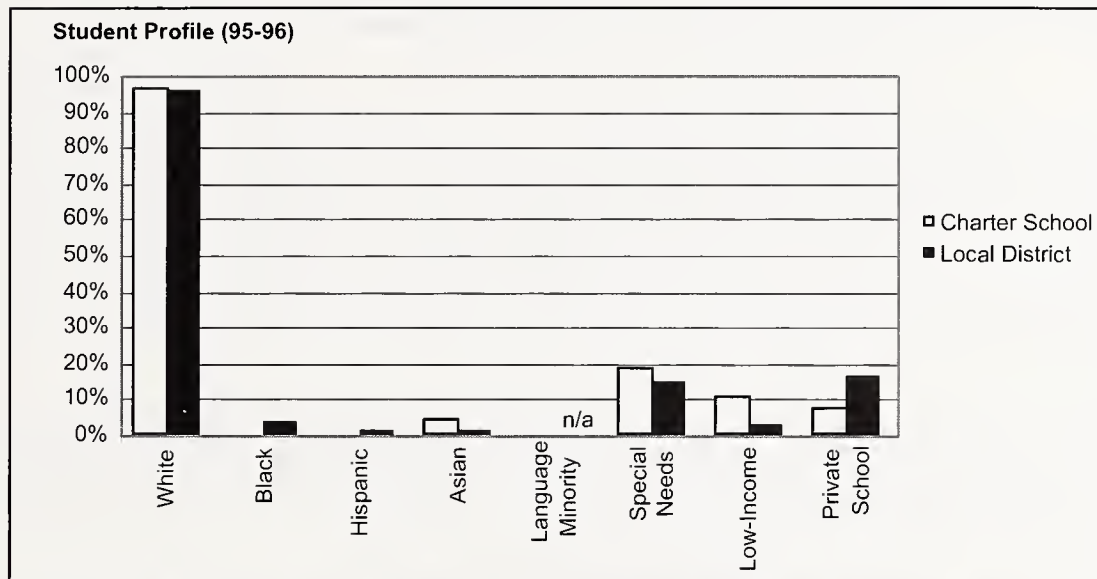
A visitor walking into the school is met by students, hands extended, who introduce themselves. The development of responsible citizenship on the part of all students is one of the school's key objectives. To this end, students participate in town meetings throughout the school year. Students also take part in the daily maintenance of the building, with time reserved each day for student chores, such as sweeping, replenishing bathroom supplies, and taking out the trash. Children also serve meals at "My Brother's Table" in Lynn, and last year interviewed women in nursing homes about the changes in their lives.

As a part of a student's ongoing assessment, the conclusion of each thematic unit brings an exhibition program where students demonstrate the breadth and depth of their individual and group studies before an audience of 200-350 parents, teachers and others. Housed in a former Elks lodge, the school's Common Room was once the dance floor and dining room where members danced to big band music.

ORIGINS: Marblehead Community Charter Public School was founded by a coalition led by several members of the Marblehead Public Schools Vision and Steering Committee who felt that their recommendations for reform had been ignored. These parents and community leaders wanted a small, experiential, student-centered alternative to the town's regular middle school.

STATISTICAL PROFILE: MARBLEHEAD COMMUNITY CHARTER PUBLIC

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	135	5-7	\$6,024	7:45-5:00 185 days	95%	259	75
	173	5-8					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
10	17:1	>1,050	80%	\$32,000-\$45,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Marblehead Community's students took the following tests in 1995-96: Stanford Achievement Test

CONTACT:

Thomas Lagerwey-Commeret
 Marblehead Community Charter School
 17 Lime Street
 Marblehead, MA 01945
 Phone: 617-631-0777
 Fax: 617-631-0500



MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School is to cultivate life-long learners in a multi-aged, project-based setting.

DESCRIPTION:

Students, who range in age from 9 to 14, direct much of their own learning at the Martha's Vineyard Charter School, located in a set of mobile classrooms joined by a Cape-style building on a forested plot just outside Vineyard Haven. Each student develops a personal educational plan to build knowledge across the disciplines. Interdisciplinary and experiential learning are planned in a variety of contexts, including individual work, one-on-one tutoring, advisory groups, and project groups. "Cause and Consequence," for example, could be a topic that is explored in some way in the projects students are working on in all subjects.

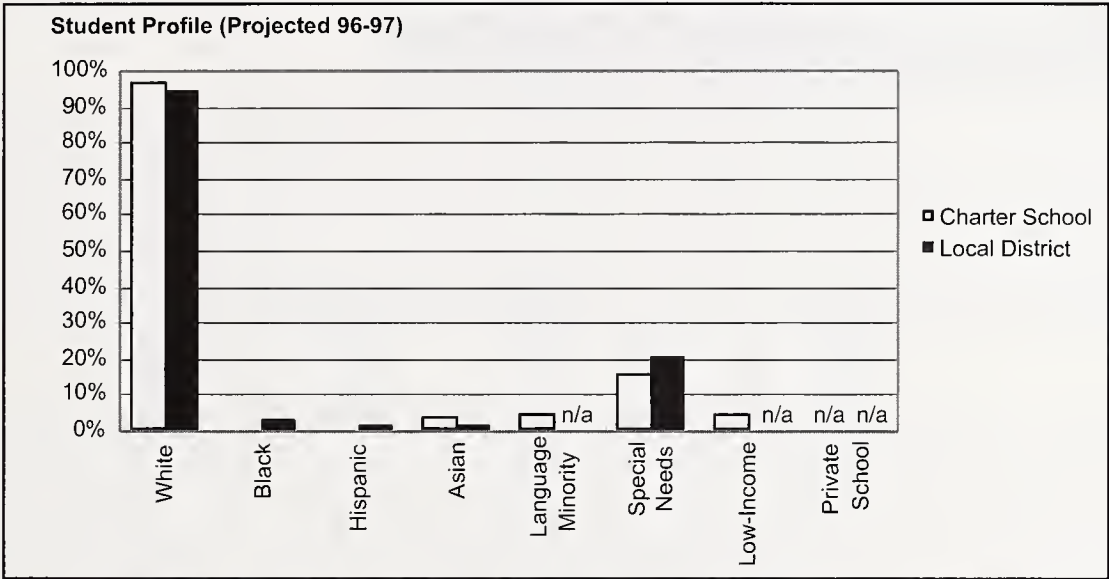
A school morning at the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School begins with a "Whole School Community Project" that can involve such activities as construction, landscaping, meal preparation, community service, performing arts, arts and crafts, or an agreed-upon project based on a school theme.

Community members serve as "experts in residence" in order to share their professional expertise and help prepare students for the world of work. The school uses a town meeting model for weekly school meetings that involve teachers, staff and students in shared decision making.

ORIGINS: Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School was started by a coalition of over 100 parents, educators, and other interested community members from across the Island who wanted to create an experiential, project-based public school for their children. "There was a need for regional school offering island families a choice of a truly learner-centered alternative," recalls Charlotte Costa, one of the school's founders. "Until now, if you wanted an alternative educational opportunity for your child, you had to home-school, move off the island, or, for those who could afford it, send children to off-island private schools."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97	75	Ages 9-14	\$9,043	8:00-3:00 180 days	99%	150	18



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
6	12.5:1	175	17%	\$35,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Martha’s Vineyard Charter School’s students will take the following tests: [Standardized test has not yet been selected.]

CONTACT:
Seth Mosler
Martha’s Vineyard Charter School
P.O.Box 546
West Tisbury, MA 02575-0546
Phone: 508-693-9900
Fax: 508-696-9008



NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of Neighborhood House Charter School is to develop in each child: the love of learning; an ability to nurture family members, friends and self; and the ability to engage in critical thinking and to demonstrate complete mastery of the academic building blocks necessary for a successful future.

DESCRIPTION: Neighborhood

House is an elementary school in Dorchester where children and their families learn how to identify, understand, and celebrate each child's strengths, learning style, interests and needs. Tailoring the program to each student, the school and family together develop an Individual Learning Plan for each student quarterly, documenting both academic and non-academic goals and accomplishments. A "Family Learning Contract" outlines the level of support each family will devote towards their child's academic progress and to the school as a whole.

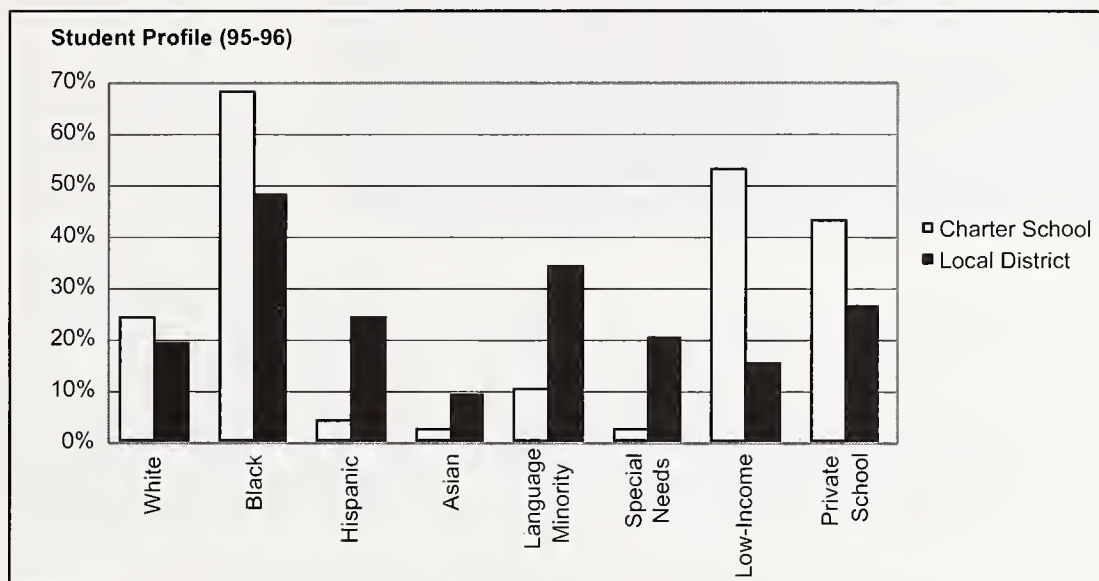
The school features small classes, individualized learning and a focus on literacy, science and technology, and creative arts. The academic program is guided by a "succeed anywhere standard," which means that students will be provided with the academic tools which give them the opportunity to succeed at any high quality urban, suburban, or private school they choose to attend. Among the school's special features is the Kidlab, a children's laboratory merging the learning of science with art that is alive with color, action, and the excitement of hands-on learning.

In the spirit of its settlement house tradition, the program at the Neighborhood House Charter School extends beyond the classroom, offering social, health, and recreational services to meet the needs of the whole child and his family. The school has a partnership with the Children's Museum and seeks to become a full service school by augmenting its partnership with the Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary with further health and social service coordination. The Parent Center was founded in 1996 to serve as a hub of family outreach, family services, and parent involvement in the school.

ORIGINS: The charter school is an outgrowth of the Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses, Inc., a community-based educational and social service organization operating in Dorchester for over 30 years. "Our vision was of a community learning center that joins together education, social services, and families under one roof in Dorchester," recalls Kristen McCormack, a parent and founder of the charter school.

STATISTICAL PROFILE: NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
95-96	51	K-2	\$7,202	8:15-3:15 180 days	95%	268	163
96-97	104	K-5					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
6.7	16:1	>350	90%	\$28,000-\$38,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Neighborhood House's students took the following tests in 1995-96: Metropolitan Achievement Test (The Stanford-9 test will be administered in the 1996-97 school year)

CONTACT:

Kevin Andrews
 Neighborhood House Charter School
 197A Centre Street
 Dorchester, MA 02124
 Phone: 617-825-0703
 Fax: 617-825-1829



NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the North Star Academy Charter School is to help inner-city youth take charge of their own education, earn a high school diploma, and develop a post-graduation plan.

DESCRIPTION: Operating in a store-front office building in downtown Springfield, North Star Academy Charter School offers a high school program for skill development through an interdisciplinary, competency-based,

relevant approach to learning. Students progress at their own pace based on their mastery of curriculum, rather than by "seat time" and grade level.

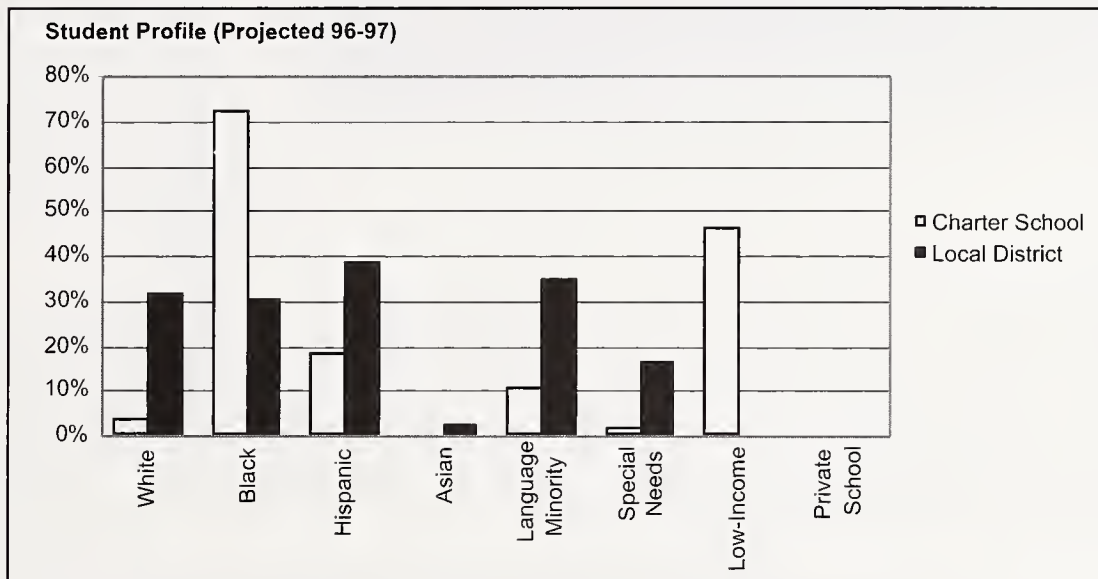
North Star Academy uses innovative teaching methods based on the Socratic approach, which involves the use of questions, discussion, and parables to engage the natural interests of students. Each academic grouping has its own team of teachers who remain with the students as they progress through academic program.

Fridays at the Academy are spent on a variety of civic, cultural, and personal learning opportunities outside the classroom. Students participate in structured community service projects and internships in a career field of interest. The school has working partnerships with several local colleges, community centers and other community-based organizations. The school, which is currently serving 72 students from 9:00 - 5:00, 213 days per year, will grow to 250 students by the year 2000.

ORIGINS: The school was founded by a collaborative of educators, parents, students, and professionals associated with the Learning Tree, a community-based educational program for minority males in Springfield. The coalition came together in direct response to the low graduation rates in Springfield's public schools. As Frank Thompson, the former deputy director of the Learning Tree and North Star Academy's administrative director, puts it, "We know from personal experience that inner-city youth want to learn, want to pursue their formal education, and want to succeed in life."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97	72	High School	\$6,354	9:00-5:00 213 days	90%	125	6



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
5.45	13:1	110	37%	\$24,000-\$28,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: North Star Academy students will take the following tests: IOWA (pre- and post-test)

CONTACT:

Frank Thompson
 North Star Academy Charter School
 1655 Main Street
 Springfield, MA 01103
 Phone: 413-732-0191
 Fax: 413-746-3449



PIONEER VALLEY PERFORMING ARTS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

The mission of the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School is to provide the Pioneer Valley with a high school for the performing arts, offering students an excellent academic program and access to

diverse, creative performing arts programs and resources exceeding those available in other public settings.

DESCRIPTION: Housed in a beautiful progressive-era school building in Hadley, Massachusetts, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School is the only public school of its kind in the Commonwealth. Starting this year with 64 ninth-graders, and growing to over 250 students up through twelfth grade over the next four years, Pioneer Valley's faculty will teach the core academic subjects through an integrated curriculum that challenges students to employ both reason and imagination, critical and creative thinking.

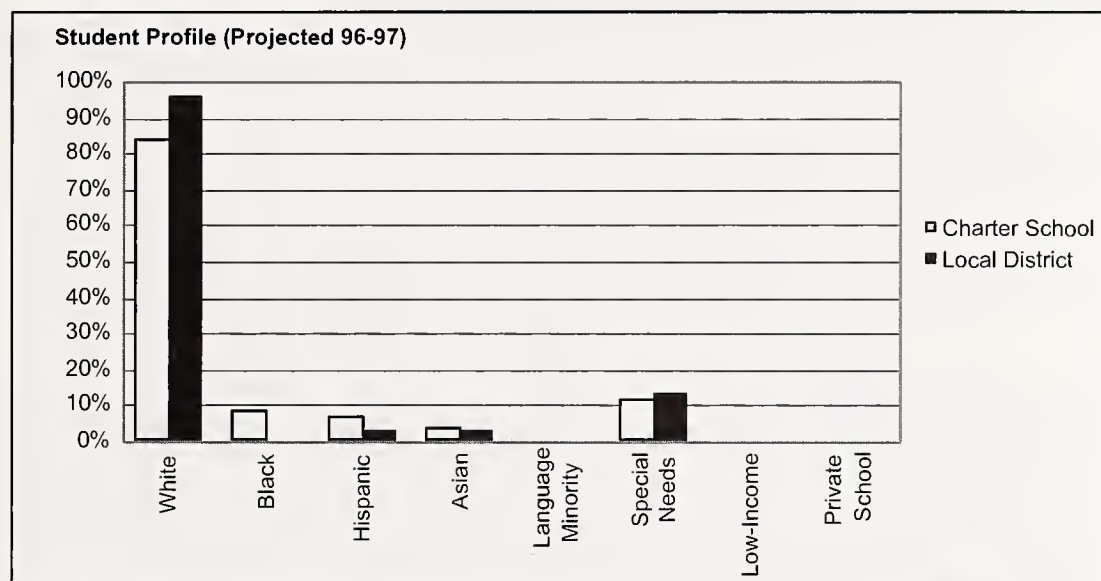
Students, who come from over 25 different school districts, meet in classes of 16 students each during the school day that starts at 8:30 and ends at 4:30. The first six hours are spent on English, math, science, and history. The last two hours are focused on performing arts. Each student has a community-based performing arts internship with a community theater, dance company, composer, or musician.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School will form a "touring" performing company that will travel to other schools, offering not only a performance but also workshops and seminars in the performing arts to students of all ages.

ORIGINS: Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School was started by the school's administrators, Ljuba Marsh and Bob Brick, along with a coalition of educators and artists active in the Hampshire Shakespeare Company. "We've dreamed of a school," says Brick, "that offers a balance of creative and critical thinking—an option that is sorely lacking in the Pioneer Valley and the public schools of Western Massachusetts."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: PIONEER VALLEY PERFORMING ARTS CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97	64	9th	\$5,794	8:30-4:30 180 days	94%	100	30



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
5	12:1	>200	100%	\$24,000-\$27,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Pioneer Valley students will take the following tests:
(Standardized test has not yet been selected.)

CONTACT:

Robert Brick
Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School
57 Middle Street
Box 344
Hadley, MA 01035
Phone: 413-585-0003
Fax: 413-585-8399



SABIS INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Sabis International Charter School is to provide a rigorous, college-prep curriculum to children of different, races, religions, nationalities and backgrounds.

DESCRIPTION: This Sabis International Charter School, located in Springfield, serves a

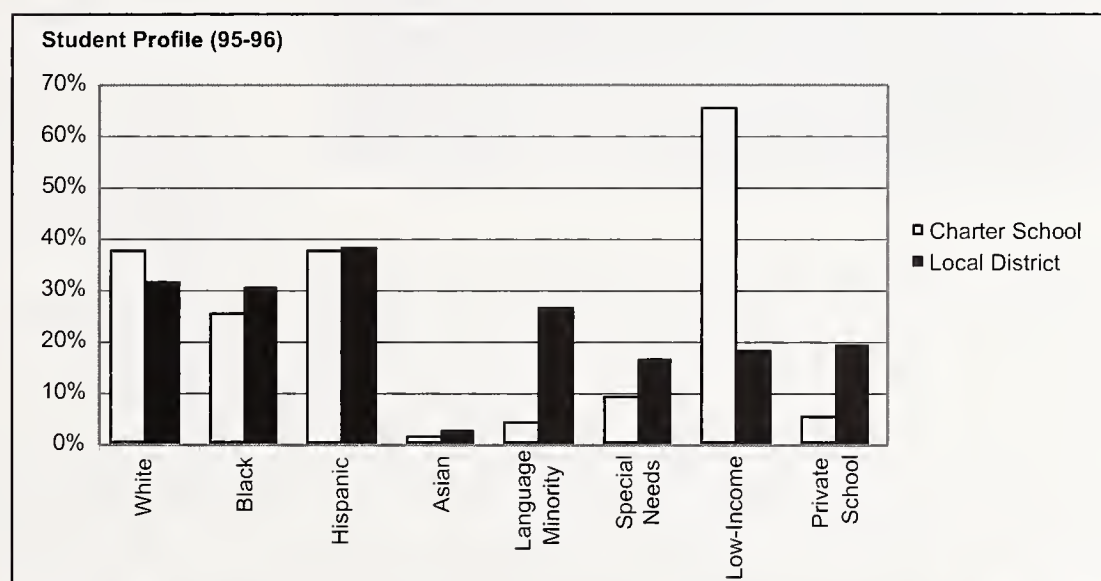
student population in grades K-8 that is over sixty percent minority. High academic achievement, accountability and assessment are this school's hallmarks. Student progress and difficulties are carefully monitored by a computerized system that tracks student, class, teacher and overall school performance. Sabis emphasizes the core subjects of math and English. All students also learn Spanish. Within those disciplines and others (e.g. social studies, art, music, science, physical education) teaching is focused on a clearly specified body of knowledge and skills.

As in the other fourteen schools across the world that are operated by Sabis Educational Systems, Inc., students in this school wear uniforms and teachers use the "point" and "prefect" system of instruction to teach. For each lesson, teachers post the key points to be discussed each class. Once the teacher covers a point, the work of student prefects are checked. Student prefects, usually numbering five per class, are chosen because they excel in a particular subject. Once the prefects have checked with the teacher to ensure they have mastered the "point," the prefects check the understanding of an assigned group of their classmates. Student leadership is further enhanced by the "Student Life" program in which students earn points for participation in various school activities that reflect the quality and extent of their contribution to the school's learning environment.

ORIGINS: Springfield Public Schools superintendent Peter Negroni, then-mayor Robert Markel, several members of the school committee, and parents invited Sabis Educational Systems, Inc.—a for-profit company—that manages schools around the world, to forge a public/private partnership to create, in Superintendent Negroni's words, "a top-notch, results-oriented school that will set the tone for greater student achievement in other Springfield Public Schools."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: SABIS INTERNATIONAL CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	450	K-7	\$6,029	8:55-3:40 180 days	92%	1442	495
	600	K-8					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
45	25:1	398	89%	\$21,500-\$45,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Sabis' students took the following tests in 1995-96: Pre and Post IOWA Test, as well as two tests developed by Sabis — Academic Monitoring System (AMS) Tests, and Continuous Assessment Tests (CAT)

CONTACT:

Michael Glickman
 SABIS International Charter School
 120 Ashland Avenue
 Springfield, MA 01119
 Phone: 413-783-4030
 Fax: 413-783-0299



SEVEN HILLS CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Seven Hills Charter School is to prepare a diverse cross-section of Worcester children for success with a high quality education at prevailing public school costs.

DESCRIPTION: The Seven Hills Charter School, which made a beautiful home out of the dilapidated Gage Street School in downtown Worcester, is an elementary school based on the Edison Project model, offering

Worcester families a world-class education through the ambitious use of time and technology, parental involvement, and character education. The curriculum, infused with the best literature, biography, art, and music, will cover five "domains:" humanities and arts; mathematics and science; character and ethics; practical arts and skills; and health and physical fitness.

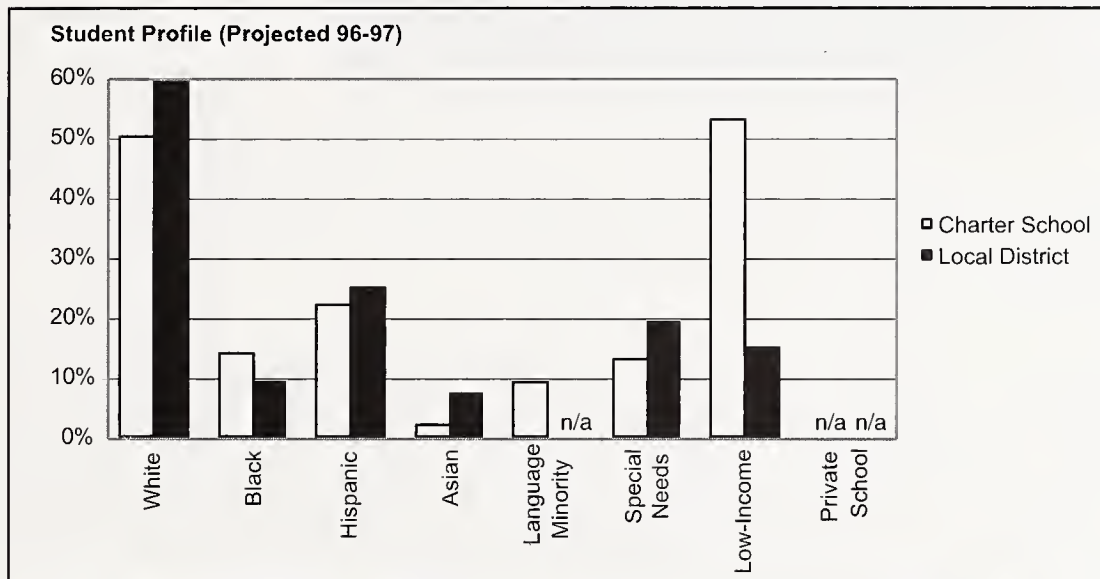
Every student at the school will be given a computer to use at home, facilitating interaction between teachers, students, and parents. Seven Hills has developed a contractual arrangement with the Edison Project, a for-profit company, for the management of the school under the same financial constraints as the district.

The school is organized into "houses" of 105 students who will remain together for three years, allowing greater continuity between students and teachers. A longer school day, including an after-school program beginning at 3:30, will allow for considerable exposure to art, music, drama, and language. With a school year that will grow over the next several years from 185 to 205 days, elementary school students are expected to complete the equivalent of a traditional high school education by the end of 10th grade.

ORIGINS: Seven Hills Charter School is the product of a partnership between a group of Worcester's business, political, and education leaders and the Edison Project. "Edison's vision for public education is one that we wanted to bring to Worcester," says Mark Colborn, a businessman who helped found the school.

STATISTICAL PROFILE: SEVEN HILLS CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97	524	K-7	\$6,641	7:45-5:00 190 days	98%	>1200	406



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
29	18:1	>400	100%	\$25,500-\$49,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Seven Hills' students will take the following tests: Brigance, Durrell (reading), and the Edison-ETS Common Performance Assessments

CONTACT:

Deborah Springpeace
Seven Hills Charter School
51 Gage Street
Worcester, MA 01605
Phone: 508-799-7500
Fax: 508-797-0547



SOMERVILLE CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Somerville Charter School is to offer a diverse, multi-ethnic student body an education that has academic achievement as its primary goal and that will develop and strengthen students' ethical, moral, and civic values.

DESCRIPTION: The Somerville Charter School

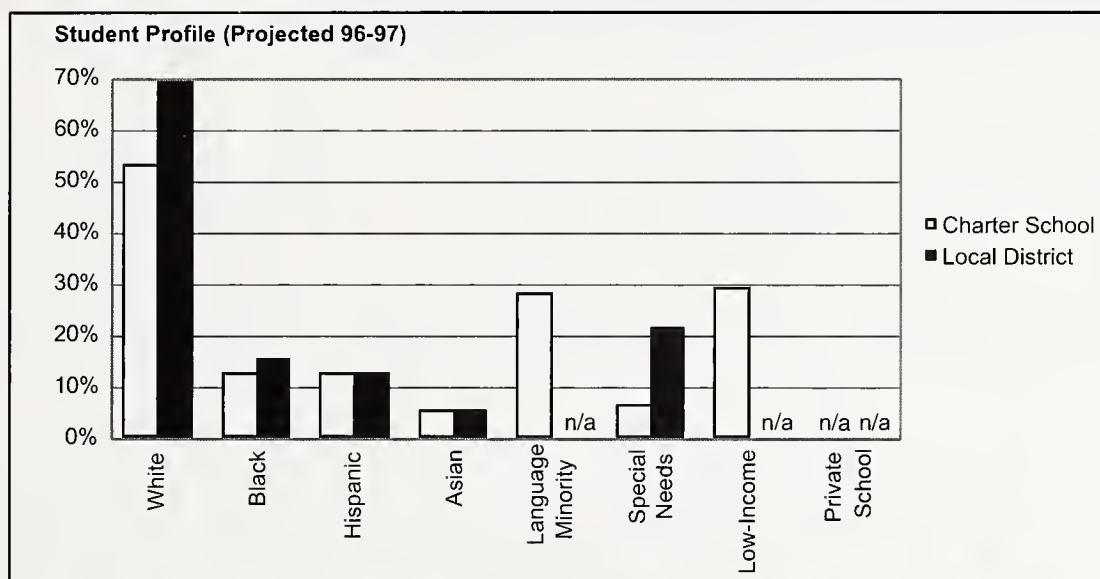
is an elementary school managed by Sabis Educational Systems, Inc., offering a rigorous, college-preparatory educational program with a focus on mathematics and English. Located in the former St. Joseph's school at Union Square in Somerville, the 500-student school offers a performance-based educational program emphasizing English, math, and world languages.

The school's curriculum is based on the research and practice of Sabis Educational Systems, Inc., which operates a network of K-12 college-preparatory schools around the world. It emphasizes abstract reasoning, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Weekly tests on essential concepts and skills helps teachers identify learning gaps so that students can work to close those gaps rather than fall further and further behind. The goal of the school, which will grow into a K-12 school over the years ahead, is to enable students to acquire a solid proficiency in a second language as well as qualify every student for college.

ORIGINS: The school was founded by a diverse group of 14 parents united by a common vision for academically rigorous education. These parents, who met through their reform efforts within the public school system in Somerville, enlisted the expertise of Sabis Educational Systems to assist them in the academic and administrative management of the charter school. As Harold Oshima, Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees recalls, "We were motivated by a vision of a school where children are challenged to do things they never thought they could, a place where children develop authentic self-confidence, based upon measurable accomplishment and hard work."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: SOMERVILLE CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97	450	K-8	\$6,231	8:00-5:00 180 days	93%	540	32



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
36	12.5:1	1,200	88%	\$22,500-\$28,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: Somerville Charter School's students will take the following tests: Comprehensive Test for Basic Skills (CTBS) in the fall and spring (pre- and post-test)

CONTACT:

Thomas Kaminski
 Somerville Charter School
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 Somerville, MA 02143
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 Fax: 617-629-0130



SOUTH SHORE CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the South Shore Charter School is to provide each student with an education that fosters initiative, critical thinking, leadership, team work, and communication, and that promotes life skills for individual achievement in education, career, community, and life.

DESCRIPTION: South Shore Charter School is a K-12 school operating out of several buildings in Hull. The curriculum is based on drafts of national and state standards. The elementary program uses the Core Knowledge Sequence developed by E.D. Hirsch. The middle and high school program is project based and includes a focus on life skills. The curriculum is presented through a series of multi-subject themes and projects. At the secondary school level, where students have the option of taking college-level courses, learning is self-paced, facilitated by a computer-based tracking system. Teachers work with students in completing individually styled projects.

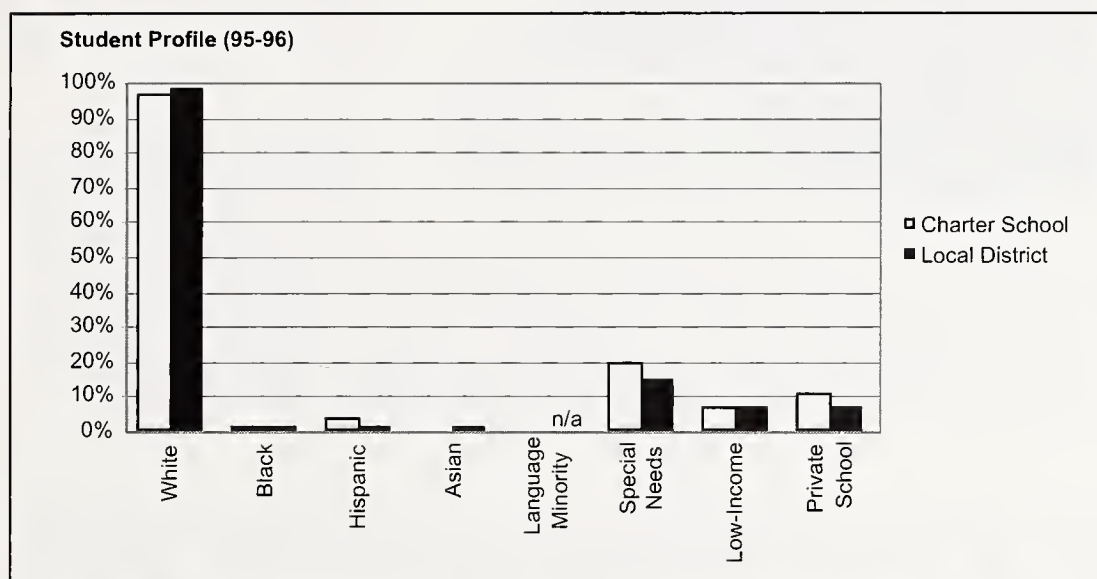
South Shore offers full-day kindergarten, world languages, and physics in all grades. Parents, who are welcome in classrooms at any time, are involved in teacher selection and curriculum development. Students and parents are involved in staff evaluation. In addition to full-time teachers, the secondary school faculty is augmented by part-time teachers from colleges, businesses, and other parts of the community.

Students are encouraged to progress through the curriculum at their own pace. Many families take advantage of the optional extended day and extended year programs. Academic progress is tracked—and can be accessed by parents—on EduCore, an interactive computer system that matches each student's work with his or her Personal Education Plan.

ORIGINS: South Shore Charter School was the vision of Timothy Anderson, a consultant who, in 1989, was hired by the Hull Council for Business and Cultural Development to propose a restructuring of the public school curriculum under the town's former superintendent. Unsatisfied with the progress of reform and the inflexibility within the school district, he joined with a coalition of parents, community members, educators, Massasoit Community College, and other partners to "develop a new type of public school to serve the South Shore."

STATISTICAL PROFILE: SOUTH SHORE CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
95-96	150	K-2 & 6-12	\$5,560	7:00-6:00 198 days	93%	627	2
96-97	340	K-12					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
30.2	11:1	325	47%	\$20,000-\$45,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: South Shore's students took the following tests in 1995-96: California Achievement Test and the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program

CONTACT:

Timothy Anderson
 South Shore Charter School
 936 Nantasket Avenue
 Hull, MA 02045
 Phone: 617-925-3078
 Fax: 617-925-9818

YouthBuild



YOUTHBUILD BOSTON CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of YouthBuild Boston Charter School is to provide disenfranchised young people with the academic, vocational, social, and leadership skills they need to leave "life on the street," rebuild their lives and take responsibility for themselves, their families, and the revitalization of their community.

DESCRIPTION: Headquartered in Roxbury, YouthBuild Boston Charter School is an educational program designed to be a rigor-

ous accelerated course of learning for YouthBuild students who want to earn a high school diploma. The program is designed for high school drop-outs with a focus on transforming their lives and building a track record of academic success. The curriculum is organized around a central theme of life leadership skills and three areas of study: construction/math; language arts/social studies; and science/health.

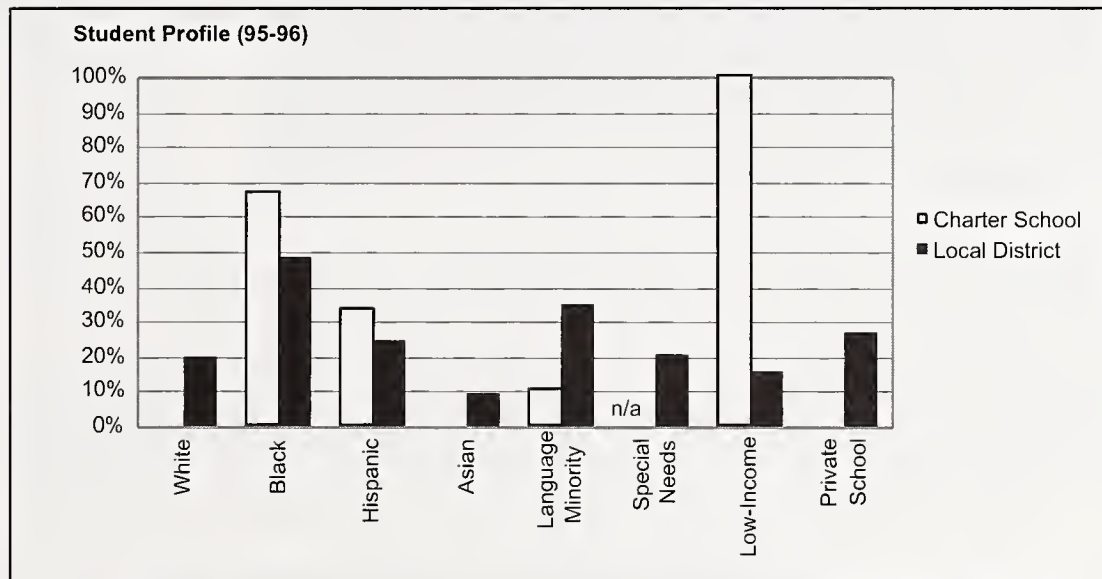
Students learn the value of academic skills through applied learning experiences, centered around the renovation of abandoned buildings into affordable housing. The school is treated as a laboratory in which the role of the educators is to create opportunities for students to experiment and apply knowledge. Each student has a personalized education plan, and students proceed at their own pace to complete 27 graduation requirements.

A Outward-Bound-like "Mental Toughness Training" prior to the beginning of school counteracts the low self-esteem and destructive behaviors of the streets. Construction projects, in which students participate while conducting their academic studies, provide a vehicle for academic learning as well as the development of marketable job skills.

ORIGINS: YouthBuild Boston has been serving young people in Boston for six years with a program that combined GED training with skills and experience in the field of construction. A number of students, however, wanted a high school diploma instead of a GED, so YouthBuild Boston responded by creating a charter school program that combines the best of the traditional YouthBuild program with a rigorous course of study toward a high school diploma.

STATISTICAL PROFILE: YOUTHBUILD BOSTON ACADEMY CHARTER

	Enrollment	Grades Served	Per Pupil Cost	Hours of Operation/ Calendar	Average Daily Attendance Rate	Student Applications	Students on Waiting List
96-97 95-96	60	High School	\$7,805	8:00-4:00 185 days	88%	>475	N/A
	70	High School					



# of FTE Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	# of Teacher Applicants	% Teachers Certified	Teacher Salary Range
6	12:1	N/A	33%	\$28,000-\$32,000

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: YouthBuild's students took the following tests in 1995-96: Test of Applied Literacy Skills (TALS)

CONTACT:

Chinyelu Martin
 YouthBuild Boston Academy Charter School
 173A Norfolk Avenue
 Roxbury, MA 02119
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 Fax: 617-427-3950



ACADEMY OF THE PACIFIC RIM CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School is to empower urban students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to achieve their full intellectual and social potential by combining the best of the East—high standards, discipline, and

character education—with the best of the West—a commitment to individualism, creativity, and diversity.

DESCRIPTION: The Academy is scheduled to open its doors in downtown Boston to 350 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders in the fall of 1997. Spread over a 210-day school year and a longer school day, the Academy's ambitious educational program will span five domains: academic skills and knowledge; practical and work skills; health and fitness; culture, art and music; and, civics and character.

ORIGINS: The founders of the Academy are a diverse, grass-roots coalition of parents, educators, community activists, academics, and professionals. The group includes members of local neighborhood organizations as well as representatives of New England Medical Center, Harvard and its graduate schools, and Tufts University. "We want to take the best of Asian education and culture to create a Boston public school that believes success is achieved by effort, not ability," says Dr. Robert Guen, the chairman of the Board of Trustees and former Boston School Committee member.

CONTACT:

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Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School
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BOSTON UNIVERSITY RESIDENTIAL CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Boston University Residential Charter School is to offer a unique educational opportunity for young people who are unsupported by a home or family structure to develop their potential as contributors to society.

DESCRIPTION: Boston University Residential Charter School, scheduled to open in early 1997 at Ft. Devens, will be the nation's first residential charter school. The school will serve high-school-aged students in foster care, offering a program with four primary areas of focus: academic preparation, experiential learning, community service, and life skills preparation. As a residential program, this school aims to replicate as closely as possible a cohesive and nurturing community environment for young people without family supports. The program will run throughout the calendar year, with a structured program during the summer and significant opportunities throughout the year for personal, social, academic, and vocational enrichment.

ORIGINS: The charter school was established by Boston University which developed this school model in collaboration with Concord-Assabet Family and Adolescent Services, Inc., a leading social service agency. The lead founder of this school is a career naval officer, Admiral W. Norman Johnson, USN (Ret.), Vice President and Dean of Students at Boston University.

CONTACT:

David Mansfield
Boston University Residential Charter School
775 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
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Fax: 617-353-4225



LYNN COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Lynn Community Charter School is to create a supportive learning environment, utilizing an approach based on essential questions and inspired by the Waldorf school model, to help students achieve high academic standards.

DESCRIPTION: Lynn Community Charter School, which will open in Lynn in September 1997, will feature an hands-on, inquiry-based approach that will foster the habits and skills of independent learners and thoughtful citizens. Each class will have a year-long theme with related curriculum inspired by questions students want to explore. As in Waldorf schools, music, art, drama and movement will be an integral part of each school day. A form of peer counseling, with students and teachers listening to each other on a daily basis, will also be an important element of the school.

ORIGINS: The school's founding coalition is a diverse, grassroots group consisting of seventeen core members. The group consists primarily of parents, educators, and social service providers from the Lynn community. The school will be an Educational Affiliate of the National Coalition Building Institute and will have working relationships with: Steven Levy of ATLAS, the Performing Arts After School Program; the Jump-Start Tutorial Program; the Optimistic Youth Theater; and Upward Bound of North Shore Community College.

CONTACT:

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For further information, or for additional copies of this report, please contact:

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"EVERYONE — PARENTS,
KIDS, AND TEACHERS —
HAVE TAKEN ON TOO MUCH,
BUT THEY HAVE DONE
VERY WELL. IT HAS BEEN
A REMARKABLE
FIRST YEAR."

Ted Sizer
Co-founder,
Francis W. Parker Charter School



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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